

Rymer's
Tales

POEMS

Written

in

Ceylon

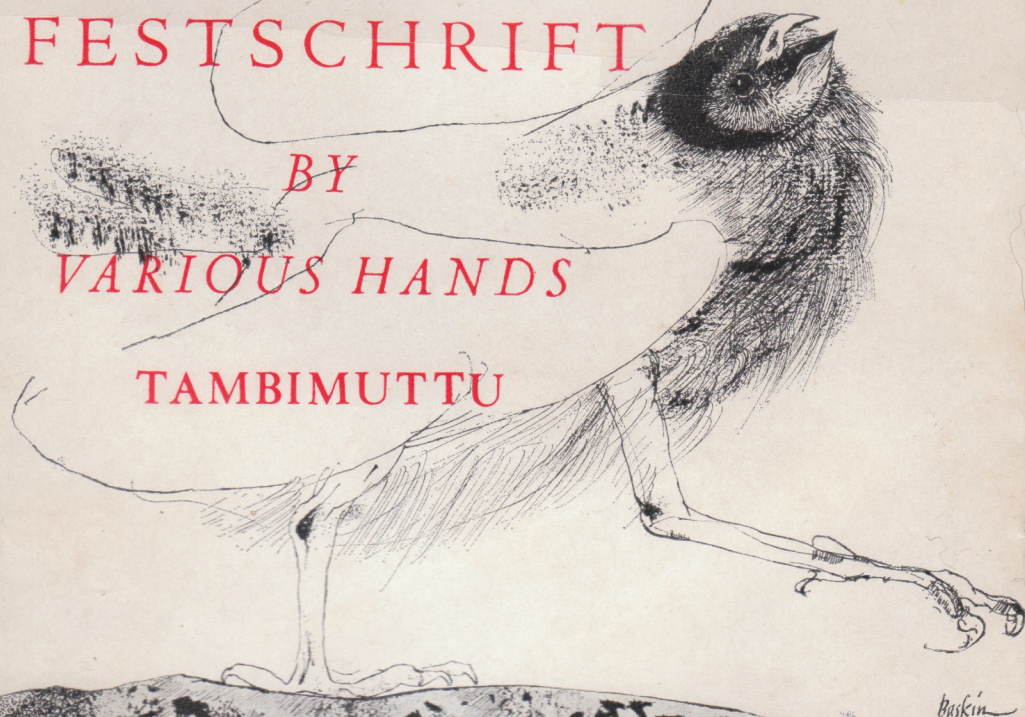
and

INDIA

1750-1755

Tamil motto

MARIANNE
MOORE
FESTSCHRIFT
BY
VARIOUS HANDS
TAMBIMUTTU



FOR OUR ABSENT GURU, RAMMURTI SHRIRAM MISHRA

The space within the pitcher, filled with sound like the whorled chank
Is the concentered speech of *sattva*,^o your round words opening out in bright rings
In the immeasurable ocean, which is timeless and shoreless.

Did you once merge with that? What was it like, was it hot
And fiery like your inward-turned eyes? Was it
Beginningless and endless like Shiva's pillar of fire

Interpenetrating the Absolute, the Zero, the Supreme?
Exfoliating, folding, like a water-lily, it is sacrifice lifts us up in smoke and flame
We are the instruments, or victims, of the cosmic sacrifice.

Living is action. We can't be without breathing, thinking and dreaming,
And actions may have no moral value. But those of *yajnas*, the rituals of sacrifice
Lead us to paramount states, the deities, the most important functions of man.

Through your gentle and voluntary acceptance of the ritual of sacrifice
You have taken your place in the cosmic symphony, as an equal;
The only purpose of your existence is the performance of this ritual.

*You are the hearthstone, and your words are the fire,
Your breath is the smoke and your tongue the flame,
Your eyes are the fuel and your ears the sparks:
In this eternal fire we offered ourselves
And you were born.*

And was it like that, in the family hearth, of the daily fire, of Sarasvati Devi
Shriram Mishra, your mother?
Finally, was it a gong, the cooing of the kokila, the tinkling of bells, a flute, a
lute, or a bee?
And when the mind was stilled, did you hear the hair-raising inner sound?

You grew giddy, but ignoring the inner sound which engulfed you
Did you merge with *shabda* -- The Principle of the Word, and hear the sound
Never before heard, which rises in the heart, pervading all?

You could have told me, but you didn't.

*The goddess is the hearth, and Shiva the fire,
Courtship is smoke, and yoni the flame;
The penetration is the fuel, pleasure the spark:
In this fire the gods sacrifice semen
And the child is born.*

^o The centripetal tendency toward a center, toward more cohesion, more concentration, more existence, more reality -- toward light, perfection, illumination or divine reality.

II

The space within the pitcher is not separate from the space outside:
It was not distinct before the pitcher was made:
It will not be distinct once the pitcher is broken

And is not, therefore, distinct while the pitcher exists.
Tat tvam asi -- Thou art That, -- the extraordinary phenomenon
Of the continually expanding form, which sweetly grows
Into the undifferentiated continuum of the Supreme Spirit,
Limitless, undifferentiated, indivisible
The divisions of space between you and us is mere appearance.
You must tell me, when we meet again.

III

I met you briefly, between stops, between this point and another,
Before the curtain fell, the scenery was rolled away, and the music stilled.
The big drums of the eyes throbbed and nearly broke in your ashram
And the answering note in your vibrant throat had the reeds and ducks trembling
-- The reeds and ducks of the lake you knew, which were so much a part of you --
And the drops were shaken from the hot-eared leaves of the apple trees that en-
shrined you.

You were the feeding crescent of the infant moon, for me, on the white - as - milk
brow of Shiva.

Return, return, so we may all drink of its *amrita*^{oo} when it's cup is full
In this Monroe, and the future Monroes, the brilliant jewels of your steps.

We offer fire to fire, fuel to fuel,
Smoke to smoke and flame to flame,
Matter to matter and sparks to sparks:
Into fire do the gods offer your speech.
From this searing burning we have seen your person
With the color of light.

TAMBIMUTTU



22. viii. 1966
Monroe, N.Y.

for Shakuntala
with Love
from Daddy

^{oo} Elixir, or the dew of life; the moon is the cup from which the gods drink *amrita* when it is full.

PSYCHEDELIC REVIEW



4034 - 20th STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114

10 Jan 72

Dear Tambimuttu:

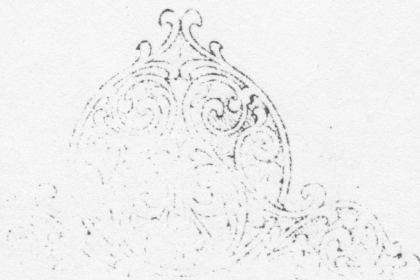
Joy, joy. We have located your excellent manuscript-- Gita Sarasvati. I can see why you were concerned. It is very fine and I hope you publish it and see that it gets maximum exposure. If we can assist in any way, let us know.

Also looking forward to seeing the back issues in book form for early distribution from both of us. We have an accumulation of orders already.

Peace,

Bob Mogan

Robert E. Mogan, Ph.D.
Editor



G I T A S A R A S V A T I :
A Theology for Modern Science

The Creation and Dissolution of Kosmos

Tambimuttu

In the beginning was God (Prajāpatiḥ vai idam asit);
And with him was the Word (Asya vācā dyāvā asit);
And the Word is God (Vāc vai paramam brahma).

With the cracking glacier sound, with thunder of time's hooves on
the mountain

The great horse of the sacrifice is in the mountain.

The timeless sound of the conch-shell is in the intricate ear,

With the roaring sound, Ham, so speaks the Word, ^{The Uddar} Vak, ~~which is woman,~~
The ^{multi-}multifoliate tree of Shiva's energy, which is woman, Sarasvati,
Whose every branch, bud and spray is the ancient veneration
of our knowledge;

Green and quivering on the mountain top
Half in green leaf and half in flame
Like the tree of the Celtic Mabinogion

-- The Welsh Word by the broad river of time
Pulsing and bright as a shaft of light to the Void, Shiva --
The poetic word, with several overlays of meaning
Not closely cropped and shaved for discursive or journalistic use
Colliding with another in the sentence of poetry,
Colliding, sounding, detonating, with several outflexions
of meaning

Ch 3 is the second page that was skipped by Diddy

Which criss-cross and outflank again, creating new words
Which repeat the process to infinity, to create the poem.

The poetic word should contain large, aggregative masses
of meaning.

Ideally, it would be the whole poem, dancing with other poems to make a
sentence.

The Word, the Word, Veda, Veda... the immense word

In which are telescoped all sounds, meanings, forms;

In the miniscule. the great word of the back-drop in the theatre,
the mountain, the prairie,

The great Word of the poem and epic, and, then, the immense Word
of the universe

Leaves of grass sum of the books and learning in libraries,
The seed-word (bīja), the semen of Shiva (bījavan), in Sarasvati,
Is the creator of the kosmos...

The Word works the turning cog-wheels of the Kosmos,

The spheres in the heavens

And the revolving, bright spheres in our minds.

In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was with God
And the Word was God
Was the chanking echo from Kosmos.

The Word is said and the Thing appears.
It said, in Hebrew, "'Let there be Light(Aur)'" and there was Light(Aur).
The Word creates: the thought molds matter

And the worlds came tumbling in with the tongue of jazz...

Weaving the Mediterranean Logos of Heraclitus,
Plato, and the Alexandrian, Philo, who showed the way
To the deliverer of the Fourth Gospel.

The Word(Vac) was made flesh; but there is a difference in ideas
Between the "'perennial philosophy'" (sanātana dharma), the remnant
Of a universal store of knowledge, the possession once of all mankind

And Christianity. To dharma (Eternal - Law) God is the material cause
of the world. It's matter.

To the dualism of the Christian Logos it is not. To dharma, the
Word is not incarnated in

One historical person, but in all matter and men.

3.
The Word was made flesh, not in one historical place,
In one particular person, on one particular date.
It appeared from THAT, which is Shiva, and now appears in the flesh
and other forms of matter

After the break on page 13, it goes back to this
Of all individual living beings, or Jivas, limited as they are,
Each of whom, through Veda, the Word, the multifoliate, flowing
tree of the Scriptures

May directly become Shiva, whose Sarasvati, the female energy,
is the Word: Vak:

The Christ figure, alone, walked the earth as God in human form,
With the remnant of the universal store of knowledge, a crown of
thorns, a harsh rosary in his hands,
And the voice of bombed London, the Congo and Vietnam, sent to the
stakes

Cried with expanding, cosmos-sized words, "What about me?"

The Christ, alone, was God in human form
Others were not, are not,
And will never be.

But Vak, the Word, manifests herself in every man
And is knowable and known as Sarasvati is in herself
That is Shiva, in that spiritual experience which is the Veda,
or the Word.

In the beginning was God (Prajāpatir vai idam āsit);

And with him was the Word (Tasya vāg dvitva āsit);

And the Word is God (Vag vai paramam Brahma);

So that the sentient rose of flesh, the fiery boulder and mountain,
All forms of matter, atomic beings (Jivas) 'spotted through' with Life,
May through the Word become It, Shiva itself, whose creative energy is
Sarasvati, caressing the vina,

The talking, human lute,

Capable of conversation, or producing all sounds; Who wears the brilliant
garland of light round her slender neck

Which is the Letters, the Syllables, the Words and Sentences of Speech (Vak),

Sarasvati riding the Wild Goose, the Gander, Ham-sa, that abstract bird of
light,

Whose very name is the mystic and real symbol of all breathing things:

The natural name of the vital breath, manifested as the expiring (ham),

and the inspiring (sah), or all breathing creatures -

Linked as they are, to the pulsation of the Cosmic Gander, the universe,
expanding and contracting,

Breathing in and out, as plants do, though on different time scales;

And inert matter breathes also, ringing in the book of changes.

5

Saraswati rides the Swan, the Wild Goose, the Hamsah,

Which swims on the surface of the water, but is ~~not~~ bound to it.

Flying through space, it migrates, north and south, following the seasons.

Divine Essence, Hamsah, free wanderer between the celestial and earthly
spheres,

Descending on the waters of the earth, taking wing again to the utmost
on high

You are the divine substance which is embodied in us, and yet unconcerned
with us.

We are earth-bound, limited in life strength, in virtues and
consciousness,

But as a spark of the divine, which is unlimited, immortal, virtually
omniscient and all - powerful,

We are wanderers of the two spheres, like the wild gander.

The macrocosmic gander (hamsa), the Supreme Self in the body of the
Universe,

Whose song of inhaling (ham) and exhaling (sah) is the sound the yogi hears
when he ~~hears~~ controls the rhythm of his breath (pranayama)

Is said to be a manifestation of the "inner gander" which is within us.

Thus, by constantly humming its own name, ham-sa, hamesa in our breath

The inner presence reveals itself to the yogi-initiate...

The song of the "inner gander" has a final secret to disclose:

Ham-sa, Ham-sa it sings, but at the same time, with the syllables reversed,

"So-ham, so-ham," it insists; and since Sa means "this", and Ham "I", The lesson is this: "This I am, This I am," rippling in the ^{music} ~~infinite lake~~ of the breath.

The individual "I" of limited faculties, sodden with delusion Tight and four-square, hooped like a barrel in the Māyā or Illusion of World-Appearance

Am actually This, He, Self (Ātman), the Highest Self,

Of unlimited consciousness and existence.

"I am He (Paramātmān), who is free and divine."

Every moment of inhalation and exhalation asserts the Supreme Void in whom breath abides, "And," sings the glorious bird
Here he says script is incomplete. Jumps on to page 10 (this is in the Indian version) he goes on in the Top tape
 "When the sun and moon have disappeared, I float and swim with slow movements on

The boundless expanse of the waters. I am the Lord, and I am the Gander."

Sarasvati rides the Ham-sa, the breath-spark of the Universe.

Without her there is no Creation. And she proceeds from the nothingness that is Shiva. But how can that be?

2.
"How can Being be produced from non-Being?" the Indians questioned;
In the beginning there must have been pure Being, One, and without a
second.

Through yoga, through introspection, they had become conscious

Of an ultimate void within themselves. "Of a stage beyond thought
and dream,

Beyond perception and knowledge, motionless, indescribable, unbounded
by space and
time," omnipresent.

Was this void the causal principle? Was there a motionless substratum for
matter

And a substratum for time, as there seemed to be one for thought?

Were these different substrata, the forms of a still more subtle one,
the indescribable Shiva?

The Indian philosophers of the Upanishads thought deeply before they
built a model for
the universe.

When we try to find the root of any aspect of the created world

We begin to imagine, there must exist beyond its form

Some sort of causal state, some indifferentiated
continuum.

of which that should be form B (81) a seeming development
The first of the continua underlining all perceptible forms appears
to be space.

Absolute empty space is conceived as a limitless, undifferentiated,
indivisible continuum

In which reside the imaginary divisions of space. The seeming localization
Of heavenly bodies, and their movements, creates the illusion of a
division of space.

Similarly, time is indivisible. Absolute time is an ever-present eternity
which seems inseparable from space.

Relative time results from the apparent division of space by the rhythm
of the heavenly bodies.

The third continuum known to us is thought. Everything exists with a form
within a coordinated system.

It seems to be the realization of a plan, the materialization of an
dream. organized

Hence the visible universe was conceived as the form of the thought of its
creator.

Whenever we go to the root of anything, we find no longer a substance,
but a mere form, a concept,

Whose nature can be identified with that of thought.

9,
And since the cosmos is a creative process, the manifestation
of a conscious power,

We are led to search for an active, or conscious, substratum for each of
the perceptible phenomena,

Which proceed from the goddess Sarasvati from whom is Nature born
(Prakriti)
whose substratum is Shiva, whose creative energy she is.

The substratum of space is existence (sat);

The substratum of time is experience or enjoyment (ānanda);

The substratum of thought is consciousness (Cit).

And so sat-cit-ānanda. The Goddess appears at the root of the three
aspects
(guna-s) of existence

As Reality, Consciousness and Experience 1 in all satchitānanda.

As Reality, she is the power of co-ordination, the centripetal 11holding11
tendency visible in the sun.

As Experience or pure absolute enjoyment, the innermost nature of
existence,
she is the power of the centrifugal disintegrating tendency,
visible in fire.

As consciousness, she is the power of understanding, the revolving
tendency visible in the moon.

Creation arises from this triple form of power, of which Shiva's trident is
the symbol.

She is Saraswati, the goddess of speech, of music and poetry, She is the
"creation by the Word."

The Word or Sound (Shabda) brings meaning or object (Artha) and Pratyaya (Mental Apprehension) to us

But to normal men, Shiva in his transcendent quiescent state is soundless (ashabda), is not a meaning or object (nirvishaya), and is beyond our comprehension (anirvachya).

In the transcendental Shiva, therefore, there is Neither name (nāma) nor form (rūpa).

In this Infinite Calm of It (Shiva) there arises now a metaphysical Point of Stress or Bindu

Which stirs forth (prasarati), as the multiple forces of the universe.

It is through this Bindu, the point limit, where the universal being and the individual being unite

The universe is manifested and then withdrawn again at the dissolution.

This movement is Shiva, through Desire, or Love (Kāma), through the stress of the One wishing to be Many,

The movement through his Lady Saraswati, Sarga, or the flowing one, is Creation

The universe is the result of the Divine Desire (Kāma) or Will (Iccha).

In the physical world the Divine Desire (Kāma) is, among other things, sexual desire.

In the transcendent it is the first creative impulse of the One to be

many.

Transcendent Love constantly works through individual sex-impulse for the
continued

Creation of the universe. The Divine Sarasvati in Shiva (She as abstract
as himself) is eternal and the beginning of all things.

spoke
And thus ~~Parmenides~~ of another century: "He divised Eros the first of
all the Gods".

"Flow" or "Motion" (Saras) is the accent of her lovely name: Saraswati
White are her garments and transparent whiteness is the color of Ether
(Ākāśa)

and the cosmic Intellect (buddhi).

The flowing One is "She Who goes pure from the mountain to the sea."

Sacred river, now called the Sarsuti, that falls from the high Himalayas
into our echoing minds and bodies,

"Watery and elegant" the Saraswati river, is your name: flood of fertility
your

hips like ripe fruits, your thighs curved as the sand-banks,
You flow in and around the static Ether which materialized at the Creation.

With the roaring sound "Ham", and then stood rigid

As the still sea of ether on which the whole universe opens and flows

As the World-experience, with its dualism of subject and object.

12.

This dual play of Saraswati, of subject and object, takes place in the
Ether of Consciousness (Cidakāśa)

In such a way that Consciousness (cit) is neither effaced, or affected,
When transcendence of the false dualism and Immanence with the Primal
Cause

Is achieved through the yogic, psychedelic, the saintly, or poetic
ecstasy.

This is creation (Sr̥sti) or, more properly, seeming development (Parināma)
Since the English word 'Creation;' involves an absolutely first appearance,
and does not truly describe the process.

It excludes the notion that God is the material cause
Christian 'creation' is neither out of pre-existing matter
Nor out of God's own substance.

To clearly state the process, Shiva Itself, in the form of
Its Power (Saraswati) goes forth (Prasarati)
To create the illusory world-play (Maya) of subject and object,
which is transcended by yogis, the psychedelics,
saints, and poets.

This creation (Sr̥sti) endures for a while (Sthiti), that is,
according to Hindu reckoning, 8 billion 640 million
years, which is One Day of Shiva.

*goes on to page 15 to
The Supreme
Sound*

Then it is engulfed in complete dissolution (Mahapralaya) for
One Night of Shiva, of equal duration.

Sarasvati, his Sakti, or Energy, has re-entered Shiva

And in Mahapralaya, a new creation is contained, potentially,
in the unmanifest, undifferentiated Shiva-Sarasvati.

Cantered from page 12
→

The Supreme Sound (Sabda-brahman) as a coming forth (Ullāsa)
of Shiva has subsided into the eternally existing Calm
Just as the rising wave breaks, and sinks upon the ocean; or
a fountain into the waters that feed it; — *Tape breaks there*
Only to rise again when the Divine Desire stirs. *just before p 3*

This awareness of the creation and dissolution of the Universe
experienced in the yogic or other (psychedelic) expansion
of the self

In which the cosmic body reveals itself as the throbbing mirror
of IT, in vibrant shapes and patternings in motion, of
extraordinary color,

Is the thunderous OM, yes, of modern cosmology. The burning prelude
was a single searing sun, a dense "primeval atom"

Which exploded and sent all matter rushing outward in the pristine
sheer symphony.

The speeding galaxies are the gossamer strings and frets and
fluted belly of her vina, and of the big explosion

...the roaring sound Ham which proceeded from OM, which is Shiva,
pervading space, time and forms.

14
The roaring sound of the cosmic flash of light, of the burning
beginning,

Is still with us, transformed to radio waves, first caught on a
New Jersey hilltop.

Light and radio waves are forms of electromagnetic radiation of
different frequencies,

The latter, the slowed down whimper of light. Was it like OM. The
first manifestation of articulate language, the music of
the spheres, the hum in the sea-shell

Of the one eternal syllable of which all that exists is but the
development?

The past, the present, and the future are all included in the
sound OM

And Shiva, who exists beyond the three forms of time, is also
implied in it.

OM is the one indestructible sound, the Immensity beyond, which
is said to contain all rushing language and meaning

Including the first sound of creation, Some think the galaxies
will go on flying forever

Asserting the principle of the expanding universe.

The greater number

Believe in the pulsating model, the yogi's, the model of the
heart.

They know mutual pull of gravitation will slow and stop the
galaxies

And they'll fall down to coalesce again
Like a round of pebbles thrown up to the Void.

This universe, extruded from Shiva, our astronomers say,
Is about ten billion years old, and will expand
For another thirty billion years--the Day of Shiva.

Then, it will stop and plunge for another forty billion years,
the Night of Shiva, into an incredibly dense mass
Destroying all galaxies, stars, planets and the life clinging
to them, in an endlessly self-immolating holocaust.

Congeaing once more, pressures will rise, temperatures soar
~~billions of degrees~~ billions of degrees
The entire mass explode once again. And as flaming matter flies
Galaxies, stars and planets will coalesce into the delicate
lace of creation,

Bright discs and globes hang on the infinite wand of darkness
~~Many~~ Non-living atoms and molecules stumble on to the key of self
-reproduction, ~~to use the language of modern science.~~
And individual lives begin a new cycle, from the Absolute
Potential which always exists.

And that is what through introspection and samadhi, the trance
state, the Indian yogis, become sages, perceived and taught t

GITA SARASVATI

A Theology for Modern Science

The Creation and Dissolution of Kosmos

Tambimuttu

A Theology for Modern Science

GITA SARASWATI: *The Creation and Dissolution of*
A FILM SCRIPT FOR "SHIVA OF THE THOUSAND AND ONE NAMES"
(A THEOLOGY FOR MODERN SCIENCE) *Kosmos (Subh)*
PART ONE: "CREATION AND DISSOLUTION"

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With the cracking glacier sound, with thunder of Time's hooves on
the mountain

The timeless sound of the conch-shell is in the intricate ear;

whispering great
(The ~~great~~ horse of the sacrifice is in the mountain).

With the roaring sound, Ham, so speaks the Word, *Vak*, ~~which is woman~~,
which is woman,

The multifoliate tree of Shiva's Energy / Sarasvati,

Whose every branch, bough and spray is the ancient veneration
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Green and quivering on the mountain top

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The poetic word, with several overlays of meaning

— Not closely cropped and shaved for discursive or journalistic use —

Colliding with another in the sentence of poetry,

Colliding, ^{sounding, detonating} ~~sparkling and bursting out~~, with several outflexions
of meaning

Which criss-cross and outflex again, creating new words

Which repeat ^{the process} ~~the process~~ to infinity, to create the poem.

~~Ideally~~, The poetic word should contain large, agglutinative masses
of meaning.

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sentence.

The Word, the Word, Veda, Veda ... the immense word

In which are telescoped all sounds, meanings, forms;

In the miniscule, the great word of the backdrop in the theatre,

the mountain, the prairie,

The great Word of the poem and epic ^{and, then,} ~~the~~ the immense Word of the Universe

....Leaves of grass sum of the books and learning in libraries;

The seed-word (bīja), the semen of Shiva (bījavan), in Saraswati,

Is the creator of the Kosmos...

The Word works the turning cog-wheels of the Kosmos,

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Each of whom, through Veda, the Word, the multifoliate, flowing
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May directly become Shiva, whose Sarasvati, the female energy,
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stakes

Cried with expanding, cosmos-sized words, "What about me?"

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garland of light ~~/~~ around her ~~xxx~~ slender neck/

Which is the Letters, the Syllables, The Words and Sentences of Speech (Vak).

Sarasvati riding the Wild Goose, the Gander, Ham-sa, that abstract bird of
light,

Whose very name is the mystic and real symbol of all breathing things:

The natural name of the vital breath, manifested as the expiring (hām),

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Linked as they are, to the pulsation of the Cosmic Gander, the universe,
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Breathing in and out, as plants do, though on different time scales;

And inert matter breathes also, ringing in the book of changes.

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Which swims on the surface of the water, but is not bound to it.
Flying through space, it migrates, north and south, following the seasons.

Divine Essence, Hamsah, free wanderer between ^{the} celestial and ^{the} earthly
~~spheres~~, ~~ambits~~, ^{spheres},

Descending on the waters of the earth, taking wing again to the utmost
~~water~~ on high

You are the divine substance which is embodied in us, and yet unconcerned
with us,

We are earth-bound, limited in life strength, in virtues and ~~life~~
consciousness,

But as a spark of the divine, which is unlimited, immortal, virtually
omniscient and all-powerful,

We are wanderers of the two spheres, like the wild gander.

The macrocosmic gander (hamsa), the Supreme Self in the body of the
Universe,

Whose song of inhaling (ham) and exhaling (sah) is the sound the yogi hears
when he controls the rhythm of his breath (prāṇāyāma).

Is said to be a manifestation of the "inner gander" which is within us.

Thus, by constantly humming ^{its own name} ~~the~~ ham-sa, ham-sa in our breath
^{initiate}

The inner presence reveals itself to the yogi-intimate...

The song of the "inner gander" has a final secret to disclose:

Ham- sa, Ham-sa it sings, but at the same time, with the syllables reversed,

"So-ham, so-ham," it insists; and since Sa means "this, and Ham "I",
The lesson is this: "This I am, This I am," *rippling in the infinite lake*
~~throbbing in the music of~~ the breath. ✓ ✓ ✓

The individual "I" of ~~the~~ limited faculties, sodden with delusion
Tight and four-square, hooped like a barrel in the Māyā ^{or} "Illusion" of
World-Appearance

Am actually This, He, Self (Ātman), the Highest Self,

Of unlimited consciousness and existence,

"I am He (Paramātmān), who is free and divine."

Every moment of inhalation and exhalation asserts the Supreme Void in whom
breath abides, "And," sings the glorious bird

"When the sun and moon have disappeared, I float and swim with slow
movements on

The boundless expanse of the waters. I am the Lord, and I am the Gander."

Sarasvati rides the Ham-sa, the breath-spark of ^{the Universe.} ~~Cosmos~~

Without her there is no Creation. And she proceeds from the

The nothingness, ~~was said~~ that is Shiva. (But how can that BE? *be?*)

OMIT

"How can Being be produced from non-Being?" the Indians questioned;
In the beginning there must have been pure Being, One, and without a
second,

Through yoga, through introspection, they had become conscious

Of an ultimate void within themselves. "Of a stage beyond thought

and dream,

Beyond ^{perception and} knowledge, motionless, indescribable, unbounded by space and

time, ~~unmanifest~~ omnipresent.

Was this ^{void} the causal principle? ^{behind manifestation} Was there a motionless substratum for
matter?

And a substratum for time, as there seemed to be one for thought?

Were these different substrata, the forms of a still more subtle one,

the indescribable? Shiva?

of the Upanishads

The Indian philosophers ^{of the Upanishads} thought deeply before they built a model for
the universe.

When we try to find the root of any aspect of the created world

We begin to imagine, there must exist beyond its form

Some sort of causal state, some indifferentiated, ~~indivisible~~
continuum

Of which that particular form is a seeming development.

The first of the continua underlining all perceptible forms appears
to be space.

Absolute empty space is conceived as a limitless, undifferentiated,
indivisible continuum

9

In which reside the imaginary divisions of space. The seeming localization of heavenly bodies, and their movements, creates the illusion of a division of space.

Similarly, time is indivisible. Absolute time is an ever-present eternity, which seems inseparable from space.

Relative time results from the apparent division of space by the rhythm of the heavenly bodies.

The third, continuum known to us is thought. Everything exists with a form within a coordinated system.

It seems to be the realization of a plan, the materialization of an organized dream.

Hence the visible universe was conceived as the form of the thought of its creator.

Whenever we go to the root of anything, we find no longer a substance, but a mere form, a concept,

Whose nature can be identified with that of thought.

And since ~~the whole~~ the cosmos is a creative process, the manifestation of a conscious power,

We are led to search for an active, or conscious, substratum for each of the perceptible phenomena,

Which proceed from the goddess Sarasvati from whom is Nature born (*Prakriti*), whose substratum is Shiva, whose creative energy she is.

The substratum of space is existence (sat);

The substratum of time is experience or enjoyment (ānanda);

The substratum of thought is consciousness (Cit).

And so sat-cit-ānanda. The Goddess appears at the root of the three aspects
(guna-s) of existence

As Reality, Consciousness and Experience - in all satchit^{ānanda}.

As Reality, she is the power of co-ordination, the centripetal "holding"
tendency visible in the sun.

pure absolute enjoyment, the innermost nature of existence
As Experience^{or} ~~Experience~~, she is the power of the centrifugal
disintegrating tendency, visible in fire.

As consciousness, she is the power of understanding, the revolving
tendency visible in the moon.

Creation arises from this triple form of power, of which Shiva's trident is
the symbol.

And the creative power
She ~~is~~ is Saraswati, the goddess of speech, of music and poetry. She is the
"creation by the Word."

The Word or Sound (Śabdā) brings meaning or object (Artha) and Pratyaya
(Mental Apprehension) to us;

But to normal men, Shiva, in his transcendent, quiescent state

Is soundless (ashabda), is not a meaning or an object (nirvishaya), and
is beyond our comprehension (pratyaya).

In the transcendental Shiva, therefore, there is
Neither name (nāma) nor form (rūpa).

In this Infinite Calm of It (Shiva) there arises now a metaphysical
Point of Stress or Bindu

Which stirs forth (pīrasarati), as the multiple forces of the universe.
It is through this Bindu, the point limit, where the universal being
and the individual being unite

The universe is manifested and then withdrawn again at the dissolution.

This movement in Shiva, through Desire, or Love (Kāma), through the
stress of ^{the} One wishing to be Many,

The movement through this Lady Saraswati, Saras, or the flowing one,
is Creation

The universe is the result of the Divine Desire (Kāma) or Will (Icchā).

In the physical world, the Divine Desire (Kāma) is, among other things,
sexual desire.

In the transcendent, it is the first creative impulse of the One to be
many.

It begets itself as men, beings, things, the weathers, moods and
constellations.

Transcendent Love constantly works through individual sex-impulse for the
continued

Creation of the universe. The Divine Saraswati in Shiva (She as abstract as
himself) is eternal and the beginning of all things.

And thus spoke Pindar of another century; "He divided Eros the first of
all the Gods".

"Flow" or "Motion" (Saras) is the ascent of her lovely name: Saraswati,
 White are her garments and transparent whiteness is the color of Ether (Akāśa),
 and ^{the cosmic} Cosmic Intellect (buddhi).

The flowing One is "She Who goes pure from the mountain to the sea."

Sacred river, now called the Sarsuti, that falls from the high Himalayas
 into our ^{challenged} ~~challenged~~ minds and ^{and} ~~into our~~ bodies,

"Watery and elegant" ^{the} ~~the~~ Saraswati, ^{river,} ~~river~~ is your name: ^{flood} ~~river~~ of fertility, your

hips-like ripe-fruits, ^{your thighs} ~~curved~~ as the sand-banks,

You flow in and around the ^{static} ~~static~~ Ether which ^{materialized} ~~appeared~~ at ^{the} ~~Creation~~

With the roaring sound "Ham", and then stood ~~still~~ ^{rigid}
^{still, as a static} ~~As the~~ ^{of ether} ~~framework~~ on which the whole universe ^{opens} ~~moves~~ and flows
 As the ~~the~~ World-experience, with its ^{dualism} ~~duality~~ of subject and object.

This dual play of Saraswati, of subject and object, takes place in the
~~place in~~ the Ether of Consciousness (Cidākāśa)

In such a way that Consciousness (cit) is neither effaced, or affected,
 When transcendence of the false ^{dualism} ~~duality~~ and Immanence with the Primal
 Cause

Is achieved through the yogic, psychedelic, the saintly, or poetic ecstasy. END
 This is creation (Sṛsti) or, more properly, seeming development (Pariṇāma)
 Since the English word "Creation," involves an absolutely first appearance,
 and does not truly describe the process.

It excludes the notion that God is the material cause
 Christian "creation" is neither out of pre-existing matter
 Nor out of God's own substance.

To clearly state the process, Shiva Itself, in the form of
 Its Power (Saraswati) goes forth (Prasarati)
 To create the illusory world-play (Maya) of subject and object,
 which is transcended by the yogis, the psychedelics,
 saints, and poets. S/D

This creation (Srsti) endures for a while (Sthiti), that is,
 according to Hindu reckoning, 8 billion 640 million
 years, which is One Day of Shiva.

Then it is engulfed in complete dissolution (Mahapralaya) for
 One Night of Shiva, of equal duration.

Saraswati, his Sakti, or Energy, has re-entered Shiva
 And in Mahapralaya, a new creation is contained, potentially,
 in the unmanifest, undifferentiated Shiva-Saraswati.

The Supreme Sound (Sabda-brahman) as a coming forth (Ullāsa)
 of Shiva has subsided into the eternally existing Calm
 Just as the rising wave breaks, and sinks upon the ocean; or
 a fountain into the waters that feed it;
 Only to rise again when the Divine Desire stirs.

This awareness of the creation and dissolution of the Universe
experienced in the yogic or other (psychedelic) expansion
of the self

In which the cosmic body reveals itself as the throbbing mirror
of IT, in vibrant shapes and patternings in motion, of
extraordinary color,

Is the thunderous OM, yea, of modern cosmology. The burning prelude
was a single searing sun, a dense "primeval atom"

Which exploded and sent all matter rushing outward in the pristine
sheer symphony.

The speeding galaxies are the gossamer strings and frets and
fluted belly of her vina, and of the big explosion
...The roaring sound Ham which proceeded from OM, which is Shiva,
pervading space, time and forms.

The roaring sound of the cosmic flash of light, of the burning
beginning,

Is still with us, transformed to radio waves, first caught on a
New Jersey hilltop.

Light and radio waves are forms of electromagnetic radiation of
different frequencies,

The latter, the slowed down whimper of light. Was it like OM. The first manifestation of articulate language, the music of the spheres, the hum in the sea-shell
Of the one eternal syllable of which all that exists is but the development?

The past, the present, and the future are all included in the sound OM

And Shiva, who exists beyond the three forms of time, is also implied in it.

OM is the one indestructible sound, the Immensity beyond, which is said to contain all rushing language and meaning

Including the first sound of creation. Some think the galaxies will go on flying forever

Asserting the ~~principles~~ principle of the expanding universe.

The greater number

Believe in the pulsating model, the yogi's, the model of the heart.

They know mutual pull of gravitation will slow and stop the galaxies

And they'll fall down to coalesce again

Like a round of pebbles thrown up to the Void.

This universe, extruded from Shiva, our astronomers say,
Is about ten billion years old, and will expand
For another thirty billion years -- the Day of Shiva.

Then, it will stop and plunge for another forty billion years,
the Night of Shiva, into an incredibly dense mass
Destroying all galaxies, stars, planets and the life clinging . . .
to them, in an endlessly self-immolating holocaust.

para
Congealing once more, pressures will rise, temperatures soar
billions of degrees,

The entire mass explode once again. And as flaming matter flies
Galaxies, stars and planets will coalesce into the delicate
lace of creation,

Bright discs and globes hang on the infinite wand of darkness
Non-living atoms and molecules stumble on to the key to self
-reproduction, to use the language of modern science.

And individual lives begin a new cycle, from the Absolute
Potential which always exists.

And that is what through introspection and samadhi, the trance
state, the Indian yogis, become sages, perceived and taught.

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Invocation to Luxmi

Where the women droops by the catastrophe
The sun hangs beads and the traffic flows
On, She is melting

She the mother of us all, the golden
Six-handed mother is melting
Flowing into the sand.

Hold us in your liquid tears
And let us grow like the bullrush
Speared to the sky

The vast tent. Hung with stars
Dust, jewels, the splendid gape
Of the disrobing morning.

The statues on the beach are flesh and blood
Nerved to their sex
And changing hours

Keep big eye into the round
Of the hollow day

The rains will come with the stinging thorn
And the ninth-month wave
Hurled to the heart

Of the mud-house. Wet, dry, round
We shall be washed
With the morning

And cockburst. Weep Mother into the lake
Into the pool, the sound, the flowers
The chaos of hours.

Bind us in the pool of tears
With the splendored rose
Of the morning.

Mixed to the roots, the fire, the rain
The falling dust;

Heavy with your proffered tears
O make us grow

My Country, My Village

When I was young, the flame-tree and the jasmine,
Gilded my youthful eyes with tenderness,
For natural things — the lotus-pond and the palmyrah:
The ring dove tore the air with natural passion;
At Achevely, my Northern home, all else
Seemed unimportant beside a bassia star.

The carriage eagle atop the rambling lanes
Wheeled the pastel sky, and a big owl
Dozed in a tree beside the tethered cow;
The goat coughed among the pecking hens
Of which I owned two, three; and morning's haul
Of egg belonged to me, they said, for supper.

I had a goat too, a cow and Lakshmi,
Gentle, big-eyed mongrel of a dog;
And when she died I did not feel like supper —
And there was Aachi, wrinkled kind old Aachi,
At six, she told us stories about a frog
In a well: food slipped down like sweetened milk and guava.

Around our house the mango shoots were pink;
x The big bassia dropped its blossom like snow,
The pomegranate spun its exciting wheel
Against the dropcloth of palm-leaf wink;
Between the oleander's and trumpet-lily's show
Pencil of grey arecanut, was wire of steel.

I was four or five, and grandfather, the poet,
In turban of gold and coat of black was a prince
Who was kind to us; he flicked the coiled whip,
And off we went down limestone white roads
Fringed with lantana eyes; from prints
He cut us paper dolls, with a clever snip.

Remember evenings in the theatre, his plays
Like Kalidasa's full of dance and song;
(My father once taking the leading role,
Great-uncle Thambar dancing with a painted face
Agile as Nijinsky): his poems, a song,
Stung me to listen, to the metric's whirl.

All this was home, and we were self-contained;
Our fields provided grain, tobacco, shallots:
Garlic, pepper, bay-leaves, ginger, saffron:
Tams, greens, herbs, fruits famed
For delicacy and flavour. The seas filled with pots,
And nets, rang in the whole seas kingdom.

This was long ago. And there was home
Beside the Eastern harbour full of ships,
And pretty shells on the deserted loner beach,
Goats-foot underfoot, and a lyric poem
In the screw-pine smell. The harbour lips
Enclosed a town beyond the railroad's reach.

There was peace in Trinco jungles too:
With leopard, deer and buffalo, I roamed
The jungle paths with Aukie, and my brothers;
And beyond were the dead cities, the clue
To ancient hubbub, now be-calmed,
-All the mighty dead Anuradhapuras.

Colombo, ah Colombo: Excrescence of Trade,
Competition, Endeavour - the pattern did not hold:
Chaos of many patterns, amorphous,
- The island's harlot, and Empire's accolade
In those days; still you were home, a mould
That shaped me in the Western swirl and rush.

Colombo was home indeed. The silver lights
Etched the night's dark with favours and delicate ^{shapes,} ~~shades~~
The streets magical by the half-light;
And when the moon dispelled the grey nights,
Silver palms stood by elfen capes,
Proud and feminine in their lissom flight.

All this we loved, my friends, Noel, Rowan,
Tison, (a young school of friends):
All this was heaven, until we grew,
And karnt the dog bit, the moon was ruin,
The gilt wore off, and all that magic lends
Is a false perspective, with the chocolate-
box view

And there was Nuwara Eliya, the new escape
With a trout stream in the well-kept park;
Upot, Haputale, Maskeliya knew few rivals,
But, alas, the concrete base and rubber crepe
Brought my village, all villages to mind, from far ^{dark}
Self-contained, these knew no rivals.

So on this festive day, with bells and bunting,
I am wondering whether the hectic pace
Will give the peace and plenty that we seek;
Whether the brash plane and limousine affronting
Shiva in the wooden cart, can grace,
Or start a new tear, on the ancient cheek.

Whether it's better to adorn the top or bottom,
To increase the village round, and soul's girth,
Our roundly add to the world's hue and cry,
-The bazaar's cheating and the traffic's hum
But this is my island, this my native earth
That bore me gently from a woman's
sigh.

Her eye a blackbird among the tumbling bushes,
Her lashes, the black silk of a deep night,
Her body the pure long scarf of Laxpane +
Lights of an ocean liner in her tresses,
Black tresses, filled with dark and light,
Cry, O Cry, Nama Nama Mata *

This poem was written for the Third
Independence Celebrations in Ceylon.

x An Indian tree

+ A waterfall in Ceylon

* "Glorious to thy Name O Mother" (Ceylon National
Song)

Jaffna

Here by toddy roots, the golden Oriole
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences;
The hearts slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet
And minds bereft of all extravagant fancies;
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauwa
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?
Did you grow with the coral under kayts,
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?
Lone by strange Fort Hammanhiel
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northernmost Point Pedro, the spanking
North Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips—
Dusty tulip-trees of the maiden
To many their childhood toy and julep!
Remember the fruit that were the play tops
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a tabletop, the landscape:
Gothic cathedrals of palmyra, doves
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo
And pensive stork, the memory endorses;
All this Jaffna, and more, you are to those,
Sprung in your red earth and bird filled groves

Kandy Lake

Its peaceful here by the constructed lake.
Buildings sit on the waters, and ripples break
On an ornamental wall covered with triangles.
Which declares it Kandyan. Tingles of
Of fussy trees makes a bright border
And the streptorian cabbage-palm roots the disorder,
Cassin's candelabra hang yellow, and the rain tree
Thrusts its coral whiskers at the powder blue sky
The garden at the southern end is a persian carpet.
Rare like cobra's diamond, and famous as a song-hit.
I envy these nut brown children tumbling down the ^{red} road,
Their school must be near heaven, on the sloping hill's
side.
Slender as the lake's reed, and tense like the sun's
heat,

This is the elfin kingdom they inherit
They say sleep-eyed princesses once dreamed on that ^{'island,}
And also a mother drowned there, quite out of mind,
Dark and light, the waters, their ancient secrets
Surface moves and ripples on the edge of sleep ^{keep,}.

A Map of Ceylon

This is a map of Ceylon to take with you,
Wherever you go, and near to your heart;
Wherever wells have dried, and wishes no longer
Chime with the clear beat;
Each raiding change micks day colder,
Each new departure, bring you where you started.

We begin at first with the hard growth of patch,
-Cockspur Thorn on the barren heath;
Where the rock breaks, the Tiger's Claw
Offers cabragoyu useless fruit;
Moon-pleins they are called; Lov's grass
With dry lichens and moss is lost.

And then the sudden fury of the rains
Lashed the hot eyes among the blue hills
The rivers were in spate and the hills' eyes -
Ramboda, Laxapana - with butterflies was full;
Dropped down into the Ganga's throat
To feed the salt birds and the shore's gulls.

Ceylon is always the map on your palm, look!
Burnt with the sun's needles and action's desiring;
That one, now is the Mount of Adam
And this, the river, named the Great One;
Beyond the lines of luck and ill-luck, conspiring,
These are the things, in the end, that will bring you
home.

Achuvally

For my Grandfather

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe
In a perfect sonnet for his darling's praise
In her lemon arms thrust the jujube and mango,
The shires plent, and ancestral grace;

Plucked her the magic islands of the West,
Kays, Hammenhiel, all those places
Long disappeared now, in the sun's depths
Where starfish with the turtle races.

Clattered the passionate stars over Archurely,
His heart beat faster in each sheer song:
The thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering
hewn tree.

And now he's gone the tines his secret keep
His mood beat down, shadowy and strong,
And in the bassia grove the orioles weep.

Ceylon

When Sofia dreams under the palm thatch
Her golden arms cool as water-melons,
The palms shoot off their choros to the burnished
And moonbeams are extravagant with their
Heart of the grass and scent of the twisted
Have made her beautiful, and the water slips
The ferns have glow-worms in their hair,
And the moss grows over the trees bones,
Delicate within her eyes grow the wild flowers,
Weaves the dreaming island out of magic
and fragile tones.

Canna

There was a day when you were in love,
And the canna heads came tumbling down;
There was a day when the tempestuous heart
Was a riot of colour in the drab town;
And as they vanished, bright colours fading,
Those trellised eyes faded and drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair fading
And ocean liner over the sky line,
Days, hands, lips vanished;
There was nothing there that was mine
The canna grew again in the same bed
Dear flesh beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of canna
Ring in the tinted heads, by the gold coast,
— Straight assegai of the passionate garden,
Intricate growth of the heart's thirst;
The fulfilment and the resurrection
Of the unlucky and the lost.

Prayer

Let me taste the silence that flows
Behind your dark eyes, O Nirvana⁺
The bird is heavy on the hill
And the silence fills

Its black vessels of sound,
The ladder is broken to your rooms
And two hands are flowers
Falling, falling

With the beat of the sea.
Crush the petals on the dust
And pitch the blood
On the running wind.

On the running sand.
The world is vast
And you are watching, watching
Through the split in the leaves—

Drown my soul, drown
Down into the night without desire—
Where the reflections are no more, no more
And rooms are broken into vast spaces.

+ Buddhist's heaven

Song

In your eyes the waters flow
The curls of the river;
Where the silent pump heaves water
To the well-heads.

Well-head and bull-dance
And the mix of petals
Are your eyes to me
- The mirror of my delight.

Scatter the roses to the wind
And let the loud room sing
Sing; Of your delight, my delight
The well-head of them all.

Reveal Her

Reveal her, raze her flat to the ground
The white kernal rigid to the teeth.
And the airs of heaven drift into the hole
The hole of heaven

Heaven is in our faces, blowing
With the slip and drift of water.

Doll on the smooth stone.

Eaten with passion.

Heaven is where the colours cross

And the waters meet

Drift, drift into the water

Where the roses mix.

The swallow tumbles into the pool

And the willows kiss

Heaven is where the angles ~~mix~~ wink

And tents are entered strongly.

Diety

Mysterious, ayoha, ayoha,

Without lips hearts or membranes

On the high mountain tops:

Eating your passion smoothly

Like oil, nuts, grapes, oranges,

The heart is a gape the breezes enter

With the running water and the beat of tides
On barren shore, the winding

Burning stair of white sand to somewhere.
Fill the valleys with song and smother
The hearts, lakes, stars, with diamonds
— Old is your sacred song.

The Only Reality

The holy loves that flower in the dark
Subside into the wet jewels of night
Quietly and without much fuss.

The trains come and go like visitors
To an open house all day,
With great commotion.

The bustle in our hooded hearts
The splitting of the city and the vibration
Are parallel and the same.

The quiet pool lies where roads bend
The suns flow
And the rooms are entered.

x

Nainital

For Hari, on his thirty-fourth birthday

None of us can escape magic; from time to time

The forest opens into a clear lake

With boats and yachts, and the heart opens

Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.

Here at Naini Tal where I have found peace

On the swan's breast, and the lit room of her eyes,

I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,

And the lake stretches intricate in the hills' maze.

A little love from time to time breaks through

The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle;

Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel,

And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;

The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,

Harnesses the heart that's been difficult and single:

Drip-drop all feeling, colours, scents

Into a bright cup that's now full.

To get here and to claim Naini Tal

As you would take a child to your breast,

To find the route that's both direct and certain
The Great Northern Road to the peaceful becks and fells
A simple remedy for our fears and ills.

Remember meeting Caliban in Regent's Park
One summer evening Kamala was the goal;
The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,
The servant-monster of a dark time;
Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,
Born of the split rock, and split wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived
From his colourful India to his stark London
The ~~revolving~~ doors of "The Wheat-sheaf" that let in
The weak and the ponderous, or the steadily wasting;
All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment
Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again

Those were times we can never forget,
When the Casino's girls were 'lovelies', Sita an angel;
When the drum of "The Caribbean" swirled the beautiful ~~dancers~~
And London's snow was a beating white gull;

Against the deep-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly
Fell the weariness and beauty in handfills

That was the old magic that gilded
The wear-torn faces and the tumbled brick,
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday,
With a pigeon-pie, a curry and a flick.
Out growing, these we booked a brand new office
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling
In the hay, or staring at fire was delicious,
When children rustled in the thudding rooms,
And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:
Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles
Hung the moon's cap on the plane's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,
With the smart picnics and woodland rambles,
Auden's slick statement lacked heart,
x And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important,
Reel with the blood's heart and brambles
It made us pause, and have our doubt

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep a fresh love's long since-cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances forgone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan
Which I new pay as if not paid before :

-But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

W. Shakespeare

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So on his thirty-fourth birth at Naini Tal
Among the sonorous hills and delicate willows,
I hope a sudden light and the new beginning
will surprise you.

Cover your darling's hair and bright eyes with kisses,
On the rippling broad lake the silver yachts float;
So may you trim and launch your dream boats.

x Himmlagen resort

x Dylan Thomas.

Epitaphic Lines To Hameel and Zahra

Now, at last, the splendored rain is falling
And the hungry earth is spoiled with kissing
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye
With its raven breast and dusky wings;
And he, no longer, has his rambling wishes
The joining rain has nestled in his eye.

Oh bless this summer of this sopting country
And praise the marriage of henge, corn and fern!

In every well there is a reflection,
In every tangled heart, a shaft for entry;
Now you have proved it dear, dear, may nature learn;
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zahra,
Slim sitara, chiming with bird and sandalwood,
In your black hair is too secreted the waterfall,
Steal the butterfly sunlight from the branches;
Your sun-bathed body, my dear, is India,
In your new love I wish you as fierce a hunger

Now as monsoon drops on tape and cottage path
And strange new shafts of light carve a new worldface,
Love's hammer rings on the mountain-head;
There is glory in each bird-breast.

I send you my wishes and my praise,
For only dreaming and the love, is actual

Villanelle for the Old Year

The old year's dying on our native hills,
Remembers your Gule night at the Golden Fleece?
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.
The memory fails and the passions chill,
And a new year follows now someone has gone,
The old year's dying on our native hills.

Pictures are fading, the worn heart mills
Now the old days have swiftly flown;
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.
It is the crowded story that stills
The bowed heart and the crimsoning dawn
The old year's dying on our native hills.

The years memories sing in silver rills
Over the mind's quiet secluded lawn;
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills,
And grieved too for the happy times, the thrills,
The weather, the loving and the corn;
The old year's dying on our native hills
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.

Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water,
With a roar of winches and the engines drumming.
People setting out for far places
Come here to roost, and faster
The engines hum, and with their growling
Is born a new sea laughter.

The bum boats have carried a man's dreams
For thirty years on this oily water,
The spider webs got caught in his hair,
His eyes laced with ~~shipping~~ rigging and ship-boards,
With life's eternal compromise and barter
In 900 BC he was still our harbour

And so they back and sail and go away
Or drown from this spot, that is the world and ours
And when eyes dream of other islands
Lay your sleeping head here and stay
Awhile; think Colombo harbour's
Our own, with sand and silence

Kortaboom-on the hill was a childhood symbol
Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish;
Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers
Of home, the eyes that were brown and simple
The drumming ships float in the harbour dish
A thousand ~~ships~~ fingers comb the palm's fronds.

Villanelle

We won't find peace in the language of war
Jawaharlal Nehru

We won't find peace in the language of war,
I have seen homes on fire like gorse;
We live today under an evil star.

September 'Thirty nine heard the passions roar,
Friends faded and passed with the autumn rose,
We won't find peace in the language of war
They dropped down dead in the crowded bar
The bomb's fierce message was sure and terse,
We won't find peace in the language of war.

All was in flame, blood, hair and fur
And lovers know what death owes;
We live today under an evil star.

Dunkirk, Warsaw, Arnhem, brave Malta
Remember all this and worse;

We won't find peace in the language of war.

We live today under an evil star.

Manipal

To many Manipal is but a name
Where their ancestors killed and brought forth
Where old houses with broad verandahs
Multiplied the families of great worth:
Where they studied 'Manipalpakshya Sutras'
To praise the antecedents of ~~each~~ ~~member~~ ~~of~~

Cultivated, conservative, progressive,
Beyond their time and condition:

The scholar Ganapathakur, the Mathur.

The greatness of Comaraswamy at Boston,

Rameswathi, Arunachalam, the statesman;

Emigrants to Malaya, France or London.

Something precious was born in Manipal
Behind the stone walls and thatch fences
Bold as sparrows, bright eyed as robins
Whole and undivided, their fancies;
They found order under the mind's
Precise and glittering lenses

So let us go down to antique Manipal
The spring of so much good endeavour;
Where the peacock flower was all flame and golden.
And there were peacocks once in that shady bower
Where silk rustled, and bejewelled hands
Blessed you and stole you for ever.

Nehru

You Eastern, sir, among the world's leaders,
With Churchill, a master of the English tongue,
Your words precise as apples and lush as cedars,
In your Glimpses of World History, one
In pure style, with Churchill, Burke, Disraeli, Gibbon,

Teach the world's leaders to choose their words
with care,

"Foresight" is not "Appensement", or "Strength", ^{The} ^{Bomb,}

"Indecision" is not "Rejection", as you say, Sir,
Common wealth the goal, not only of Ceylon,
But America, England, all things that are born,

Teach us to choose right in this terrible moment,
Lover of Peace, brave voice of Torment

Cloisenburg, Ceylon

A bit further down, its land's end;
Here on the toasting, curving beach of Galle,
Looping whitely and serenely southwards,
Merg a trader and marauder like a gull
Settled for a while on this rocky escarpment,
Grubbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rockcrabs
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly:

Shells like bassia flowers and melon seeds,
And stronger tints on the conch's belly
Flaunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;
The tepid sea's an acid-green like netti.

The viridian palms frame caste castellated Closenburg-
The sea-salt dream of a fierce old sea captain;
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous windows
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water
Is a rug, squat Closenburg is wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off a buggalow
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and
silver ships,
And the heart wishes the round world were
mine,
To toss to you across the apple water,
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

SINHALESE LOVE SONGS

BY

TAMBIMUTTU

YOU CAME TO ME.....

You came to me with your red hibiscus lips and the
saffron moonstain congealed upon your brow like
water gleaming in the nelun blossoms
you breathed on me with the full-blown pinesmell in
in your prescence and the soft-voluptuous mingling
of the sungrain in the heavens when the papaw-
leaves are drooping big-eyed in the crackling
noonday heat
you brust on me like a golden cassia shower of big-
lipped innocence shaking a store of yellow-gleaming
sovereigns into the quiet pool of the limpid
evening dusk
and you spoke to me beloved in the mysterious voice
of pulsing sandalwood and softly breaking jasmine
buds
the stark-nakedness of full-fleshed lonely mountains
and the wide open spaces with the stars swinging over
them
for you were my ambalam* in the desert ways when ~~the~~
the fire of youth had died withen me ~~and~~ like a
snuffed-up candle flame in the breathing dark and
left me a wisp of cotton-nothingness in the
racing squat tempest of life
and you took me to you beloved from the mud in which
i was born; wiped the rough tears from my eyes
with ~~with~~-your lotus fingers
and gave thid ragged and vagrant soul the little
happiness for which it had always longed
with a dumb-eloquent look
in its animal eyes

—my poor
eyes

I DID NOT KNOW.....

i did not know that the remembrance of your eyes
was the sorrow of the ninth-month floods and the
fury of the monsoon tempests when they batter the
mud-and-bamboo homesteads down
else i would never have attempted this wilderness
alone and forsaken your warm bosom for this
grim mockery of an ambalam*that is happy with
sorrow-falls and bright with curling darkness
i grabbed a crackling sun within my spurting fingers
and found that i had sought the wreckage of a
faded sunflower in my youthful impulsive pursuit
for escape
for the having of you was also a juggernaut sorrow
too heavy for my fleshed-and-blooded nakedness
to endure with fortitude and manly undauntedness
that's why i sought an odour when the blossom was
in my hand a twining glamorous prescence forever
that's why i'm pining away in this lone-loneliness
and regretting i ever left you my
Nunni!

YOU ARE DELICATE LIKE A PINK COWRIE.....

you are delicate like a pink cowrie that the flower
hands of the ocean have deposited on the soft-sanded
shore

and i am afraid to touch you with my passion lest you
crumple like an earthenware pitcher under the wheels
of the juggernaut in which our Lord is carried in
state when he visits the dim bazaar

so let me hold you in my hand my Nunni like a glistening
heap of rosy pomagranate that i am reluctant to eat
because they are so very beautiful to look at

and let me twine around you like the broad emerald
flame of a giant creeper that clings in a delirium
of happiness to the brown bosom of a lofty tree in
the jungle

for i want to have you Nunni, gently, delicately in my
blood like the fragrant spices that breathe impal-
pably in the Moorman's muscat and his sherbet wine

and i want to breathe and throb and thrill and live
and die with you in a perfect oneness-loneliness

for you are the dark oil within the bowl and i the wick
and how shall i ever burn without you?

CAN YOU HEAR MY HEART BEATING AT YOUR WINDOW?.....

can you hear my heart beating at your window Nunni?
you say it is only the monsoon rain
~~did~~ you not know i was the wind and the clouds and
the clouds and the beetle-black darkness
before i was born?

can you not hear the murmur of the molten water
slipping among the peacock reeds my Nunni?
do not tell me it is only the stream
for i was a sun-kissed stream in the mountains before
you were born and
and i know it is my love that is deep

can you not feel my lips on your lotus feet my Nunni?
i was also the dew in the grass
and when you sleep among the hot-mingling grain and
and the ~~sunspurts~~ ~~sunspurt~~ sun-spurts
remember you are resting on my heart

I WILL BUILD A BUNGALOW FOR YOU.....

i will build a bungalow for you just as the white men
 have upon the edge of the intimate-sprawling sea
 with a flame-coloured verandah pressed with close-
 cropped railings milky as the jasmin moon
 and the exulting wind from the ocean shall curl throu-
 gh thy sun-kist hair like love
 and we'll sit together two clasping pools of sun-
 shine on the lake, with our hearts excitedly
 young-lipped-whispering
 and you will bud and flower in my brimmeng hand like
 sparkling water in the lonely jungle places
 and i will drink of your daybreak-simple beauty in
 the restless heaving sunshine.....

.....
 ah Nunni, why must you live away from me?
 and why must i be alone?

REPOSEFUL COW-BELLS.....

reposeful cow-bells are tinkling like silver stars
where the soft-folded ground is a quietness of
spurting grass
and a violet ring-dove in the brave-fingered palmyra
quoodles of the yearning that is born in things of
the earth for each other, as the lips of the sunset
stain the hills and the sea
so steal into my heart my Nunni with the surge of the
hunch that the Holy Brahman is blowing to our many-
handed god in the darkness of the temple
steal like the brave-timid wind stealing into the
warm bosom of the jasmin beds or a secret snake
into the slime-soft darkness of a soft-fleshed
mystery
.....
Nunni!
ah my Nunni!

7

WHEN THE WANDERING CLOUDS

when the wandering clouds or night have pitched
have pitched their grey tents in the stark wastes of the sky

come into the tent of my heart beloved
for then am i tired with my toil

and if on a dark night you shall discover
a lonely rose heavy-lidded and sleepy with dew

remember it is my tired heart
weeping for you
in darkness

(8)

BE TO ME AS THE SUN IS TO THE SKY.....

be to me as the sun is to the sky while the crumpled
hours are withering like blossoms
spring in me as an eternal spring unbudding a swirl
of light and laughter in a silver shining rose
besmy light when the rolling cogs of darkness pass
silently over the face of the earth
abide with me like the firm rock in the forest and
the undying whisper hovering on ~~Laxapama~~* like a
molten eternal palm frond in the air
speak to me with the voice of the streamside willows
and the murmur of platinum moonlight spattering the
passionate rice-fields
and hold me fast beloved in the fastness of thy loneli-
ness &
a joy removed from the breeding of the earth

hold fast
fast

YOU LOOKED AT ME WITH YOUR EYES LIKE FULL-BLOWN LOTUS

ES.....

you looked at me with your eyes like full-blown lotus-
es and smash-entered my soul/ that was hard as
seasoned satinwood

and my soul was a fragrant heap of lemanthemum bloss-
oms delicate-fleshed-voluptuous in their naked
moonstone milkiness

i flowered and heaved within me in bank upon bank of
vernal floweriness wet-leaved and after-shower-
flesh-exotic smelling like a bursting cloud of
crimson lantana inflorescences

and i did not know where to hide my flaming passion
too mighty for the dagaba* of the earth to enshrine
it in its brick-and-mortar-passionless bowels and
without light and without bursting warmth to hold
it isolated in seclusion

and i climbed up to the barreh mountains and crucified
my fruitfulness upon its heights and my wail went up
to the sorrowing sky

and the tear drops that were shed from the heavy ~~l~~-
lidded eye of the heavens

are/ the showy lemanthemum ~~on~~ the kandy streams,
the blood-blot lantana in the Vanni and all the
blood-and- milk-warm-passionate blossoms of
of the world

EVEN THOUGH YOU MUST BE GOING AWAY.....

even though you must be going away from me to a place
where the fogs are like the leaves in the jungle
and the sun but seldom shines
Nunni~~y~~ you will come to me by and by ~~and~~
and i will come to you

you will come to me like a quiet breeze in the evening
when i'm tired and very old
when my hair is white like water-lilies on the stream
and my eyes are dimmed and gone

and i will take you in my old tired arms
and forget you ever went
for even though you will live for many weary harvests
in the white-mans teeming cities
your heart will remain for ever
with me

COME TO ME WHEN THE CANNA SUN.....

come to me when the canna sun is reeling drunkenly
on the edge of the high-terraced rice fields and
the crimson water is clotting in thin sinous
streaks among the passionate hills.

come to me when the song of the breeze is eddying
sensually through the filagree neem in delicate
cascades of soft sound and the spiny brittle
stars are pricking out of heaven

steal to me away from the huts of your tribe and
the eager fields of your ~~tribe~~- koeralay* to
the stark loneliness of my desert home

for i want to hold you naked and palpating on my
bed beloved, a wild eyed child, slender as a
leopard and noble as the hills of your blossom-
smeared Kandyen home

YOUR FACE WAS GOLDEN LIKE THE TEA-BLOSSOM.....

your face was golden like the tea-blossom my Nuri
that moon-burned night we lay beside the canna
bed behind the white-man's stately park
and we whispered our first love to each other very
softly like two winds straying into a corn-field
hand in hand and shaking the rice-ear-anklets
to a honey sweet estasecy
and when i felt your wet lips cling to mine with
the dense passion that is born of holy love, i
looked up to see your baby face that was golden
as the tea-blossom
and all i saw was a ridge of moonlight on a myste-
rious waste of darkness with two still-watered
pokunas*that were your beautiful eyes
and now that you are absent from my arms and the
golden moon is resting on the palm-leaf like a
bright veined rose-petal on quiet ~~un~~glowing
water
my heart is cracking like a dried-up stick beneath
the weight of ~~this~~ loneliness too lonesome to
bear because it is the loneliness beloved
for you

THE SMOKY-LEAVED CASUARINA.....

the smoky-leaved casuarina spreads its then smudge
like a cloudy veil against the warm breast of the
sky

and i am flowing an inchoate mass of blue darkness
into the broad folds of the evening that is spread
in the spacious air like the muslin-vague odour
of vegetation in a fast-budded lonely jungle -

i am losing myself in the vague tumble of lily stars
and the unobtrusive smilax in the grass with its
humble odorous flowers little as sesamum seeds -
but the remembrance of you is a grim-sweating cable
of ten-twist hemp that hails me back to myself with
the cruel realization of this unwearable lone-
loneliness

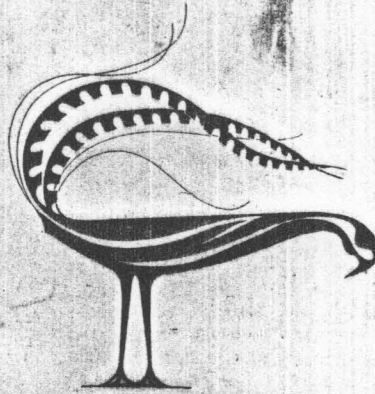
so i stand and pray coiled within the vast hall of my
lonely deserted heart i was lost forever in the
close-footed removedness of a pulsing lily star
of a passionate smilax bud

and i wish i could burn my shadow from my feet for you
are my eternal shadow and my shadow is sadness -
eternal sadness because you were joy transcendent,
in the scarce-away days, not very long ago

Lambimuttu

TWO-TWENTYSEVEN WEST ELEVENTH STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10014

Poems 1936



~~1935~~ 36
1935 - 36

~~CHANDON~~ SONG

a tale has an ending

my tale

has no beginning

i felt

a song undone within

when we first met

there was no beginning

it will not end

BALI AND MAYA NOW DANCE.

O Natarajah

Noblest, ^{AND} ~~THE~~ grandest conception of Man
FUSING INTO ONE
< Science, religion and art ~~to one~~
You ARE the
< Key to the complex fabric of life
~~Not~~ ^{to} one faction or country

Or one Century
You ARE
< Universal in your meaning

To philosopher, lover and artist

Throughout all ^{of} Time

Apex of all those artists

Who have strived

In remote island, desert or lonely garret

To mold, limn, utter, utter

Their intuition of life

In these days of ~~the~~ thought in pigeonholes, compartments

The synthesis of all thought

INEVITABLE

REAL

Your profound cosmic rhythm

Earth sound

Sound of interstellar spaces

Not dogma, ^{or} ~~not~~ superstition

The syncretism

Of the facts that are evident

You are the Supreme Energy

Science ~~not~~ defines

Behind all phenomena

No artist of today, however great

NUANCE

day broke
on the hills
i awoke
and sighed

the day laughed
through the glade
i remembered
and cried

the day
was a flame
in the brush
but within me
was

only
a name

a name

VIGNETTE

iron-rails and coach-wagons
in the murky station

deserted platforms
and the lonely

porter
smoking a cigar

three red lights
are glowing
in the distance

i have missed my train
to Colombo

REMEMBRANCE

Wisps
of remembrance
crisp
whorls
swirling
and hovering
importunate
at the doorstep
Fricasee
of friable crockery
and cracknel crumples
brittle to the
mind's feeble antennae
and the urgent breath
Then....
drifts
curled and involuted
tenuous
whirled whistling
and the stir
of muslin
softly soughing at your casements
responsive to dimly familiar impacts
Vague contact
of the mind with old landmarks
Luxurious waddle
in the puddles
of ancient scrub and stone and stubble
Relaxation
lapse of blood and muscle to lazy
masturbation
and then
the squealing in the blast
and onslaught
of a baboon horde
Lurch and roll and limbo
the brake
grates
Shudder

~~WOODOUT~~ LANDSCAPE

metallic palm-trees
are jangling
in the breeze

fat nutty bells
are dangling
like a hundred

breasts

but

the patient

grass

is creeping on
and on

E P I S O D E

a cluster of city lights
huddling in the darkness
a wild constellation
of frightened eyes

i am cranking my bike
with merry feet.
grinding a happiness
from grating cogs
and rattling ball-bearings

slipping to oblivion
to my love
a hundred miles away

NUDE

dirty pavements
with coolies

joss-sticks smoking
in the dim bazaar

and the pingo-man
in a sarong

rolling life
 grinning at the mouth
happy in the mud

that's where life is rolling
like a broad stream

 stream
the mighty
 torrent

where i belong

and

this life

M O T I F

i am the life
and the awakening
of the earth

but the earth
does not want
life
or
awakening

The earth
is a dead
rat
hanging
by a
pole

S O L I L O Q U Y

lean willows
are sprouting by the stream
in merry hordes

the dark water
is the sad tale
of a lover

but
my tear-drop
is an ocean

no willows
have i
to comfort
me

WOMAN

Incursion into India of the ukelele
land of the lotus and filagree temples
heavy with filoselle and figurines
four-stringed Maori toad
but it cheered me by the whistling stream
strafed, strafed
quashed Stradivarius by the whistling stream

Incursion into me of you
was there a need
a necessity?
I do not know
but you were also beauty
I carved a niche for you

REVELATION

Tears, sausage tears, dumbly dropping like apples
more eloquent than cabbages

ESCAPE

A square ball rolled on the ground

WORDS

words

baste them in honey

i will discover them

brazen words

braised to tenderness

i will not swallow

without irritation

that's why

i am

an enemy of men

other men

understand

only by

words

CAVATINA

i dreamed

in the lap of the wind.

and broke of the bread of despair

shimmering wheels are grinding in the dark

a sad story

I D Y L L

lone grass

lost

and alone

you have wandered far

in this wilderness

of rock

and arid stone

golden haulms

caressing the warm earth

you lie

flesh to flesh

blood to blood

drunk with the warm flesh

of the humid earth

you have come far

seeking

i have a long journey

to go

yet

to the solitude
the silence
and the loss
in loneliness

where the stars are
and the plains
and the burning sand

where i will find
my love again
reborn
of a foetus
of loneliness

for i am solitude
vanished from men
and sand
in the ~~social~~ wheels

so let me go
drifting
to the wilderness

to find my love
~~as you have~~
lone.

~~grass~~

REVEILLE

awake

beloved

for the sky is heavy with the sun
and fields are drowsy with light

goodbye

take all my love

with you

and leave me

with loneliness

and this longing for you

this craving for you

you are the beating in my blood

so

you will always be with me

goodbye my life

and yet i will always live

within a memory

for you are life

CHIAROSCURO

love

you are hope

in my despair

but i remember

hopes

are

abstractions

love

you are laughter

in the mud-house

but ~~i~~-sigh

i sigh

and remember

laughter

has

tears

you are a dream
that must pass away
with a night

for with the dawn
has dawned the world
and i am worthlessness

so leave me happiness
for ever
i shall never need thee again

for

~~iam~~
i am but a life
within a memory

FLOUNDER

My heart

stumbled

I met me

as you ambled by

I fumbled

for the jumbled fumaroles

of my heart

I floundered and let

a fulsome heat

beat

on a white lily

Fiasco

Forget

a fool and his money

MUTABILITY

Behold the caterpillar crawl today,
Amoeba-like, a blotch of sombre grey.
Tomorrow, see him draped in red and gold,
Inflame each ferny bank and withy wold.
Behold the white-ant flit today on wings
Of gauzy fineness - most hyaline of things
But see the morn hath left him wingless, shorn,
He's but a worm, a crawling worm forlorn.
Thus must this worldly windmill run its course,
The rich be crushed, penury find a close;
Thus must the proud detruded crawl and groan,
The low exalted reap the good they've sown.

INVOCATION

window-bars

straight and orderly

spilling sunlight and whisperings

bar my eyes

my ears

and my senses

my soul is

a troubled flame

in the gust of

young desire

window-bars

straight and orderly

bar my eyes

my ears

and my senses

9th July 33

THORNS

Sharp thorns are women and they bleed
Our feet and hearts together.
The blood they draw is sacred meed
That holds us fast in tether.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

A light there was that shined,
A beacon far away,
That stood at Heaven's Gate
And burnt for man its ray.
But man, alas, took water
And poured in sinful play
And smoking, smoking, smoking
Its left unto this day.

THE MAGIC TOUCH

A voice I had forgotten murmured
From the distant mists.
The song I had forgotten echoed - echoed - echoed,
And the chord that I remembered
Trilled again in its fullness,
- And my heart ~~was~~ awoke to the memories of a yesterday.

R E V E R I E

memories

of happiness

with you

make me feel

a god

on earth

x x x x

i close ~~my-eyes~~

my eyes

and remember

the roof broke

on Samson

B A L L A D

i must go

for

i

love you

i must go

for

i

am

sorrow

i go

the world will build

on my heart

E P I S O D E

a cluster of city lights
huddling in the darkness
a wild constellation
of frightened eyes

i am cranking my bike
with merry feet
grinding a happiness
from grating cogs
and rattling ball-bearings

slipping to oblivion
to my love
a hundred miles away

NIGHT - P I E C E

a voice

in the dark

the sky

and

one star

happiness in

in my soul

trouble outside

thy words are weaving

a fairy story

with the magic looms

of long ago

so long ago

~~ASHES~~ POEM

Rose-petals and woodwind

You

Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic
iron-rollers on the gravel

lurching and scrunching

with a jangle of pistons

You in me

This incessant rasp and irritation

rankling as a supreme passion

may make me kill

this other you

and me

and

i will slide through the centuries

soulless and blind

noiseless as a ghost

gliding on the weeds of the wind

and in each tangle

fumble

for something i have lost

and cannot remember

Through interplanetary space

slinking

like a fox with one eye

i will go

(incomplete) P.T.O

Continuation ACHE

~~Searching~~

~~Searching~~

searching

searching

for a sensation I have lost
and cannot remember

..... thus it is

I found

it's better to have you and suffer
than not to have you at all

POEM

Rose-petals and woodwind
You
Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic
iron rollers on the gravel
lurching and scrunching
with a jangle of pistons
You in me
This incessant rasp and irritation
rankling as a supreme passion
may make me kill
this other you
and me
and
I will slide through the centuries
soulless and blind
noiseless as a ghost
gliding on the weeds of the wind
and in each tangle
fumble
for something I have lost
and cannot remember
Through interplanetary space
slinking
like a fox with one eye
I will go
searching
searching
for a sensation I have lost
and cannot remember
.....thus it is
I found
it's better to have you and suffer
than not to have you at all

S E R E N A D E

when flesh meets flesh
in the silent darkness

and we lie ^{mouth} to mouth
deliriously in the dark

and arms and legs are twined
in a wild ecstatic gesture

and the blood is another darkness
flowing mysteriously in my veins

when i have looked on flesh and loved and lain
deliriously in flesh again

and the throbbing of thy breast is the nautch song
that has unloosened a mysterious self in me

let me mingle with the darkness and the night and you
and graze of the dark mystery of life that i shall never know

for you are the mystery of life that i shall never discover
and i the only clue that i shall ever find

SKETCH

a cicada

was singing

merrily

in the palm

grove

when the air

was warm

and sharp

and the pool

was molten

ore

was molten

love

among the

brown

palm

stems

SOLACE

mud house without a roof
and the temple-tree bending over you
pouring a song of blossoms and crooked stems

symbol of my battered soul and another

pour cascade of blossom
on the gaping heart

oil runs smoothly through machinery

S E R E N A D E

when flesh meets flesh
in the silent darkness

and we lie to mouth
deliriously in the dark

and arms and legs are twined
in a wild ecstatic gesture

and the blood is another darkness
flowing mysteriously in my veins

when i have looked on flesh and loved and lain
deliriously in flesh again

and the throbbing of ^{your}~~the~~ breast is the nauteh song
that has unloosened a mysterious self in me

let me mingle with the darkness and the night and you
and graze of the dark mystery of life that i shall never know

for you are the mystery of life that i shall never discover
and i the only clue that i ^{will}~~shall~~ ever find

B E C A U S E

i love you

because

you are understanding

in

ununderstanding

i love you

because

you are sameness

in

diversity

i love you

because

you are

despair

and

sorrow

and

madness

madness

THROB

a skylight
is puffing moonbeams
in my room

the monster machine of the world
is gleaming outside
and.....

ah
what will the little grass do?

SKETCH

a cicada
was singing
merrily
in the palm
grove

when the air
was warm
and sharp

and the pool
was molten
ore
was molten
love
among the
brown
palm
stems

SOLILOQUY

lean willows
are sprouting by the stream
in merry hordes

the dark water
is the sad tale
of a lover

but my tear-drop
is an ocean

no willows have i
to comfort
me

POEM FOR TWO NICE YOUNG PEOPLE

Her eyes full of darkness and her arms of balloons
 A frail figure in the enormous verandah,
 Back from the Fête where she shot down the moons
 And planets clattering round her at the booth, Miranda!
 Troubled by another's voice to stark oleander.

Tensed before the target, her small body drawn
 In, like an accurate winging bird;
 A child's hands at the gun, more guts than brawn
 She looked some immeasurably wild and lovely thing,
 Stored entirely with the whole of Beauty's word.

Now she stands smiling in a different mood,
 Her arms full of balloons, and half awake like the morning;
 Her eyes full of a good light (the good
 Constant and homely sparkle his timely warning)
 In her grand volitions all life, adorning.

So bud, maiden, bird, deliver
 Your ornate pictures and sentences to the world,
 But the simple white necklace of the believer
 Adorning your dark throat is the mould
 Of he holds and you, as the revolving and just world.

So utter, utter the white sentences of endeavour
 That trim the flame and launched all Helen's ships.
 The music and flame you both know deliver
 Only the formless and the thundering whips
 - Go soon to the beautiful and black ships.

TAMBIMUTTU

BE TO ME AS THE SUN IS TO THE SKY.....

Be to me as the sun is to the sky, while the crumpled hours
are withering like blossoms

Spring in me as an eternal spring, unbudding a swirl of light
and laughter in a silver ~~shining~~ rose *roll*

Be my light when the ~~falling~~ cogs of darkness ~~pass~~ silently
over the face of the earth

Abide with me like the firm rock in the forest and the
undying whisper hovering on Laxapana* like a molten
~~eternal~~ palm-frond in the air

Speak to me with the voice of the streamside willows and the
murmur of ~~platinum~~ moonlight spattering the
passionate rice-fields

And hold me fast beloved in the fastness of thy loneliness

A joy removed from the breeding of the earth

Hold fast
fast-

* a waterfall in Ceylon

J A F F N A

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences;
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauwa
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?
Lone by strange Fort Hammanhiel
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northermost Point Pedro, the spanking
North Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips—
Dusty tulip-trees of the maiden,
To many, their childhood toy and julep!
Remember the fruit that were the play tops
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape:
Gothic cathedrals of palmyras, doves.
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo
And pensive stork, the memory adores;
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to those,
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

TAMBIMUTTU

S o n g

In your eyes the waters flow
The curls of the river;
Where the silent pump heaves water
To the well-heads.

Well-head and bull-dance
And the mix of petals
Are your eyes to me
- The mirror of my delight.

Scatter the roses to the wind
And let the loud room sing
Sing; Of your delight, my delight
The well-head of them all.

PRAYER

Let me taste the silence that flows
 Behind your dark eyes, O Mirvana.
 The bird is heavy on the hill
 And the silence fills

Its black vessels of sound.
 The ladder is broken to your rooms
 And two hands are flowers
 Falling, falling

With the beat of the sea.
 Crush the petals on the dust
 And pitch the blood
 On the running wind

On the running sand.
 The world is vast
 And you are watching, watching
 Through the split in the leaves-

Drown my soul, down
 Down into the night without desire-
 Where the reflections are no more, no more
 And rooms are broken into vast spaces.

X Bhaddit 'haren'

B H A R A T.

It was this fierce heat set fire to Kalidasa
Kambar, Valmiki, Avvaiyar,
In this antigonon land, wounded with flamboyante,
Blood, poinsettias, and the bitterness there;
O' terrible furnace of endeavour
Where cooks the saint with the wild boar.

It was a fierce heat shook humming birds
Aflutter, in the thickets of Wardha;
Set the blue note in the bulbul's throat
And darker streaks for his gray head;
Kindled the faggots at Rajgat
To make the red rose of his love.

Laureate fell the bright planes
Over Ganges River, and heat broke
For a moment; the sobbing river
Filled the desert and the heart spoke;
After deluge, the buds broke:
Bharat shook with the thunder.

Sings coveal on the coral tree
Lapped in flame from chest to throat;
Heat arackles in the hills' veins
And thus the crotolaria's born;
The naked child of the innocent lanes
Grows into the lusty man.

It was this furnace shaped the axe,
 Drove it through the dark wood;
 Shaped the pimeval locks
 That bind the dreaming sage's head,
 Launched the boats for Lanka

And further than the present's good.

2.

And so the Dreamer-at-the-Gate
 Has pin-pointed a difficult star;
 The easy and the elphemeral
 Slide away, and the hear stirs
 To a Visionary's difficult task
 The mind stuck on the Time's burrs.

All then is difficult, the fever licks
 Burning matter into new shapes;

The Idealist's pointed star
 Swings o'ver the fiery lakes;
 Assets the true and good
 What once was beautiful.

And thus it is I greet you,
 Bharat of the story book;
 Where Arjun was bewildered
 And Krishna gazed his flocks,
 Where Sita uttered love
 Drew the human map.

AERIAL FLOWERS

Fireworks! The broad pillars on either hand
Of the House of Representatives, tall
And solemn, frame the painted picture below:
The turgid crowd beside the jappanned ~~and~~
And still sea, a gay and motley fall;
Near us, relieved by a patch of Buddhist yellow.

The brigh lights of ice-cream cars runnel
The Beira's dark sable - still water.
To our left, on tall pylons, see,
Two red lights, like a fairy's durnbell!
On high, the fire-flowers, leaves, flutter,
Delicate like these Burmese faces beside me.

With a snowfall brush the sapphire sky is painted
In fire, ~~with~~ with a shower of ~~the~~ spheres, ovals, aces,
Ferns, trees, palms, naves and steeples,
And troll and airy in the fire-house mated;

BLACK ROSES

(Apartheid)

Jan Smuts died and the people wept,
Black roses faded in the African veldt;
Black bodies luminous with blood and sweat,
Fell like dead leaves, and yet
The furious wind whips the black, limp leaves,
Black corn, black Mondays, sad eyes:
Fearful hearts rattle by the torrid shore,
Lobengula's black wrath is no more.
The sun ~~shines~~ shines unequally in Africa now,
The mighty will persist, and the weak go;
The sirocco will consume the black roses,
Racial fires fire the hoar poor houses;
Jan Smuts rise from Table-Mountainside,
Thunder and black lightning in his just ~~the~~ eyes.

BIRTHDAY POEM FOR BAPOOTA.

==== 7-1-1953

On this your eighty-second birthday, we remember
 The trim and spritely Islam Gymkhana member,
 The gallant captain, who out of many a fix
 Pulled his side through with his heaver for a six,
 Or sudden googlie that skidaddled a man for nix;
 We also remember the President of the Club
 Scintillating brightly over the drinks and grub;
 The Master Mason in his dizzying robes
 Dispensing kindness to those snobs and nabobs;
 Chairman of Committees and of Anjuman-I-Islam
 The eldest architext; but chiefly today
 We think of our own Bapoota, kindest of all the Beys,
 Who for the pretty girls still has a wicked eye,
 Lying in Tyaba's lap, and dreaming of bigger fry!
 Tyaba is tiny, but Suraiya we know is big
 So Bapoota nowadays alas, cares not a fig
 For Amena, Rabia, Ruffoo, Jappy or At,
 He's shifted over we know to Suraiya, and that is that !
 His roving eye will discover many another miss
 We know, and with that merry toast,
 We end our birthday letter and send it to the post.

Love From
 Tambi & Guri

16th February 1952.

BIRTHDAY POEM FOR THE VERY BUSY GIRL

Well, dear Doll, another year has gone
 On the swift swallow wing flown;
 The scintillating girl of Navindra Mansion,
 One solid year more grown,
 And all of us, Bapoota included, now know,
 You are the ~~xxx~~ laughter and the lights of home.

How can five feet grow as you do
 Year after year, in our estimation?
 You explode daily in the quiet rooms
 In showers of spangles, gold and carnation,
 Dusk rose, black hair, busy fingers, ~~dancing fingers~~, dancing words
 A subtle and devastating compilation

In five feet compact, and thought important.
 So like Surya, ~~and~~ Varuni and Agni we praise you,
 The elemental and essential Guri;
 Bright as quicksilver and busy as the ant
 How that poor Bapoota's desk you misconstrue!
 -- And thus may you remain Anna's busy and fulminating Guri!

4.

CEYLON.

When Safia dreams under the palm thatch
 Her golden arms cool as water-melons,
 The palms shoot off their chorus to the burnished
 sky,
 And moon-beams are extravagant with their bright
 shillings.
 Heart of the grass and scent of the twisted vine
 Have made her beautiful, and the water slips over
 stones,
 The ferns have glow-worms in their hair,
 And the moss grows on the trees bones,
 Delicate within her eyes grow the wild flowers,
 Weaves the ^{dreaming} island, out of ^{magic} music and fragile tones.

Ceylon

When Sapia dreams under the thatch porch
 Her golden arms cool as water-melons.
 The palms shoot off their choruses to ^{a hurried} ~~the~~ ~~appetite~~ by
 And moon-beams are extravagant with their light
 Heart of the ~~mango~~ ~~bassia~~, ^{shillings} ~~graves~~, and ~~scing~~ of
 Has made her ~~beautiful~~, ^{the twisted vine,}
~~the Moss~~ ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~water~~ ^{ripples} over stones,
 The tree-fans have glow-worms in their hair.
 And moss grows over the tree's bones.
 Delicate within her eyes grow the wild flowers
 Hates magic of ^{fragile} ~~dark~~ ^{dark} ~~tones~~.
 Wears ~~the~~ ~~island~~ ~~over~~ ~~the~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~fragile~~ ~~tones~~.
 Ceylon
 The island over the dark and fragile tones.
 magic

by **TAMBIMUTTU**

which was broadcast from Radio Ceylon on
 Friday night by Sita Jayawardene, Jean Pinto,
 Jayantha Padmanabha and the author

being a special Independence
 Day radio feature written
 and produced

Ceylonese Vignettes

TAMBIMUTTU:
ARROWHEAD of green trees
 in the quiver of the Ocean
O Ptolemaic Taprobane, Se-
rendib to Arab,
 Coronet of cassia, sharp taste
 of cinpamon.
 Ilam of the Tamil, Sinhala
 of the Aryan.

'The island which is known by the
 name of Lanka'
 Royal Valmiki and the text books
 say;
 Tharkshish of the Bible, whence
 every three years
 The ships of Tyre and Sidon brought
 ivory and apes.
 Roman Palaesimundu, where the
 Ravan's eyes
 Ravished the gold princess of Sita
 Eliya;
 Maya Rata, Ruhuna, Pihiti (the
 King's Country)
 Lanka is divided into three parts.

SITA:
 Unless someone speaks the truth
 sometimes
 For all the time, my friends, it
 would be boring.
 We shall all believe in Amirthalingam
 Whose sole desire is to sell cabook
 to the Government.

JEAN:
 On this day, we must forget the
 disease and poverty
 Let us think of our jazz bands, the
 guardians of culture,
 The carnivals at Ladies' College and
 Bolgoda Lake,
 Where you may be happy if you
 had the money.

JAYANTHA:
 And there is our Director of Cul-
 tural Relations
 The most important one.
 With his minute, fiery heart
 Clocking in the tides of a monthly
 salary.

JEAN:
 But my dear, he was educated at
 Columbia
 Where there is ignorance of poetry
 and vice.
 Like the Bronx he is equable and
 nice.

JAYANTHA:
 Ceylon, is and that I was born in
 With the temple tree and the iguana.
 Your waterfall dispelling the dark-
 ness.

SITA:
 Lyrical Island in the agony of birth
 The harbour lights eating into the
 island,
 The palms all sundered
 With the salette of their fierceness.
 The harbour lights eat into the body
 The harbour lights warn us day
 and night.
 Shall we sell the blood and have
 the money
 Sell the cabook, and get stinking
 tight?

The price of cabook is on the up
 and up.
 And when it isn't up, it will be down.
 Now that we've started, we mustn't
 stop.
 We'll be growing cabook in our
 gardens soon.

TAMBIMUTTU:
 Arrowhead of green trees in the
 quiver of the Ocean.

TAMBIMUTTU:
 O Ptolemaic Taprobane, Serendib
 to Arab.
 Coronet of cassia, sharp taste of
 cinnamon,
 Ilam of the Tamil Sinhala of the
 Aryan.

'The island which is known by the
 name of Lanka'
 Royal Valmiki and the text books
 say:
 Tharkshish of the Bible, whence
 every three years
 The ships of Tyre and Sidon brought
 ivory and apes.

Roman Palaesimundu, where the
 Ravan's eyes
 Ravished the gold princess of Sita
 Eliya.

Maya Rata, Ruhuna, Pihiti (the
 King's country)
 Lanka is divided into three parts.

The chaplet of Mauryan Ashoka and
 Sanghamitta

His pious daughter of the holy
 Second Order.

Mahinda, monk brother, Bodigupta,
 Sumitta,

Lak Maha Lee and Jaya Maha Lee.
 Sacred bowl of coral in the lap of
 Arya Varta,

Green branch of the bo-tree carry-
 ing the Wheel of the Law:
 In the bell of dagaba and cone of
 goparam.

Two Thousand Five Hundred ashoka
 blooms.

Where Elara the Just and Young
 Duttha Gamini

Set into motion the Revolving
 Wheel,

The stars chase the Wesak lamps of
 the Vihara

And the green years break into red
 flame and yellow.

Like the Sigiriya rock-bird, giant
 Garuda

That has resisted the rip and tide
 of ages,

Through Vuyst, Dharmapala and
 Ehelepola

The grand sweep of Mihintale in
 your wings.

JAYANTHA:
*In the tea boutique there is a girl
 In the tea boutique, a fey heart;*

*In the tea boutique there is a smile,
 But who will dare catch it
 But the young man in the car?*

*Under the brown thatch an age old
 richness,
 Cloth of jasmin and moon, a simple
 splendour.*

*Under the brown thatch her fierce
 candour*

*And who will dare catch it
 But the young man in the car?*

*Under the brown thatch the simple
 bow of her lips,
 Under the palm rafters her dark
 tresses*

*Blowing. Under the kerosene lamp
 her black eyes smouldering*

*For memories of the cool and
 blossomy hills*

*And the faithless young man in a
 car.*

JEAN:

Under the jak tree the fruit is
growing
And the fat fruit ripens and is shed.
Under the jak tree the people
gathering
With the new born crying out for
bread.

SITA:

Under the bassia stems the black
bass gather
Striving for the new-fleshed tender
fruit,
Unholy carrion of this strict
weather
That will never bring us to any
good.

JAYANTHA:

In our beautiful land there is no
hunger and poverty,
Consider what the tourists say,
consider for instance

The wine filled coconut tree, with
its one hundred uses,
Colombo, the cleanest of Eastern
cities;

The life as extravagant as the be-
wildering vegetation.

The Silver Dawn, full of 'O Man
River' and 'O Tchichania'

Among the concrete and garish
plaster sung by the 'chesty' bass,
The finest club in the East.

SITA & JEAN:

Incursion into *India* of the ukulele
Land of the lotus and flagree
temples

Heavy with floselle and figurines;

Four-stringed Maori toad, But it
strafed

Strafed, quashed, Stradivarius by
the whistling stream.

If you really love me darling buy
a motor car

Papa will think my darling o how
rich you are.

Papa will think my darling o how
rich you are

If you really love me darling buy
a motor car.

JAYANTHA:

National day is a day for rejoicing

The choice is not for us too simple.

The brazen world will fly the flags
and bunting;

It is a sign of youth also, the pimple,
That adorns the young and sparkling
face.

The jolly human race,

However old and wrinkled or simply
dimpled.

On this important and great day

Say, the prayers for country and for
glory.

While the leaden minutes thud

Pad the simple well known story

And if it's hoary

We can all be just as terribly gay.

The Under Secretaries we know have
little to do.

Woo the Ministers, sir; You'll have
something done?

Remember P. Saravanamuttu's sixer

When he socked that leather as only
gentlemen do.

And over their heads it flew

Sara, we know, was never a splendid
mixer.

SITA:

At the Tamil Union the grey heads are
nodding

Prodding at motes and straws and
all things odd.

Why did Sir Oliver join the S.S.C.,
Sanction the sale of straw to Ruthven
Todd?

Todd is odd.

The God of Sloth and Dullness de-
frauding.

The land is old and civilized we all
declare.

Dare we project further the enquir-
ing mind?

Astounding slums of Pettah, the
empty chatter.

Of Sooty Banda and others of the
kind,

Fit for the school mag and the duck's
pond

No doubt, but heigh ho, heigh ho, for
our ancient culture.

JEAN:

The splendid vein of materialism in
our land,

(O poet who's been selling our Big
Soul to the West!)

In the West now he's somewhat un-
welcome guest,

Will surely, my dears, attest,

To the survival and virility of ONLY
THE BEST.

But National Day, to be proper, like
New Year's Day,

May, my dears, be used to further
ambition.

—Personal or collective we don't care
a damn

Since it is our blessed and human
condition;

And if it's not sedition

What ho, what ho, for another Bri-
bery Commission.

SITA:

We don't give a damn.

JEAN:

We can't care a damn.

JAYANTA:

What ho, what ho, for another Bri-
bery Commission!

TAMBIMUTTU:

The breezes on the midden

Unbidden linger long.

The violet and the primrose

Chose my simple song

And with the gong

The old words harden

Island of sweet pleasure

Leisured in the sun.

Kingsfishers wrote your glory

The story of your dawn

The poets unborn

Will add their treasure.

And while the ages lustrate

Flusters the cool mind.

Island of my childhood

Ride the raging wind.

Happiness bind

As the storm clouds muster

Now the shadows lengthen

Strengthen the old ways,

Lanka's long pageant

Agent of more praise

In new days

Our pristine glory waken:

O the Old words harden

Burden of changed mind.

The wind of Pain arise

Wise and most unkind:

Yet to bind

The breezes of the midden.

JAYANTA:

The world of green that would be
man
Speaks the dark words that utter
birth
In the jungle the bitter truth
Lives in the delicate line of the
worm
Ageing as the hills and streams,
Insubstantial as the wind.
Seasons melt from rust to green
Poised on the bougainvillea thorn.
The revolving seasons mix
In the mind's coloured horn.
Have of spilt leaves
Phases of the parent moon.

SITA:

Under the dark stream the same
meaning
Confusion of the same things
Under the shadow of Pidurutalagala
And Adam's Peak, so shift in
accent,
The heart to adventure wildly
The millennium come.
Heart of the rose in all matter
Rose of the growing spirit
Reddening the unending struggle
That demands and yet gives
Without surcease, and unstinting
The cypress, the palm, and the
lily.

JEAN:

As birds go, as winds blow,
Under the revolving horizon's rim,
The will's direction suddenly
changes
Shapes the face of a new day;
Utterance of a change of heart
Bound to the same roots.
The world of green growing to man
Wavers on the fringe of doubt.
The icy weather chills the buds
Loosens the intemperate worm.
O Freedom sleeps when Freedom's
rife
Cautions the mocking bird.

TAMBIMUTTU:

But on the river I have heard
The minnows calling each to each.
The birds fall in white confusion
Round the season's pearly throat.
The delicate rivers start
In leaf and root and rose.

The birth of all the singeing buds
On the tall mango tree:
Annunciation of the beginning
Voice of glory to be,
Make-believe, real, and not
To believe, because of the acid
fruit.

What are my eyes, web of dreams
Wrested from darkness into being?
The hinged doors of love recede,
To the darkness of Unknowing.
Dark on dark the Miltonic setting
And to the dust returning.

Birth's often the exciting part
Beginning, a burden.
The green, new islands of the sea
Are the coral's persistence.
The design, the direction, the love
conspired
To give us this new perfection.

CHORUS:

Stars are on the Kandy Lake
Green fields in the Vanni.
The tall palm waves by the railway
shed
And there are roses in the post
office.

From our sleep we are plucked at
last,
Slumbering long we have woken.
The thousand lamps of the temple
are lit

The thamarai blossoms sparkle.
We've thrown a human chain to
Sri Pada

As of old. The flowers and our
bodies mixed.

Can't you see the flowers on Sri
Pada

Among our children's faces?
We hail our Ceylonese Nation and
State

The first our country knew
Sinhalese and Burgher, Tamil
and Moor United in our humility
salute you.

The
Heavy with your grow.
O make us grow.

LAMBIMUTTU on COLOMBO

AND so home. Revolving time has brought
The sun to his oven, and the traveler home.
Eyes I looked at by the garden gate
Are gone with hair's brilliance, and kind words;
The simple look framed in her lashes' ovals,
Lost with the bright moments, and gay birds.

IN you h we picked the lily of the Beira
For tranquillity: ^{green} and ^{pure} bamboo grove;
By Galle Buck, we took the breeze's kisses,
For her innocent kisses, and were much in love;
Played in her hair schools of silver fishes,
And in her breasts slept the turtle dove.

SHE was all desire, from Mount Lavinia's beaches,
To chiffon/spray on the harbour mole;
And when lights powdered the masts' stresses,
Flowers grew in the water, and fiery salamanders;
When the white sun began to roll
On the lighthouse top, we discovered silvery places.

IN the Park, the iron fountain wept,
Softly among the duck-weed and tall rushes;
We were children, and I remember Mary
Who whispered to me, "I am from England";
On Sundays, we danced to the Band's
Ta-ray-rey, ^{trailing} four loops and ribbons round the band-stand.

THIS was long ago, when mud-stained boys
Cranking bicycles, were shot through narrow gates;
Seaming motors deposited some,
And Suppi in his carriage, bound in brass,
Seemed a sedate and ink pirate
Singing "Yo, Ho, Ho, and a Bottle of Rum".

LIFE on "Treasure Island" was competitive that year;
The boys even knew the book by heart
"Best Form at School", the teachers had said.
Desks became bloody decks, and clear Rang cutlasses and pirate's craft
When through this droll life-symbol we were led.

WE "crammed" for "places", first, second, fourth,
For "prizes"; strained a muscle; shut out the noise;
Only the noise grew, and everywhere,
New schools donned caps, to prove their worth;
Life's cheer-leaders in correct disguise
Urged the green lads, it was all fair.

PLAY the game; but Victory is best:
Three years at cricket, we defeated Royal;
The rehearsed stance of sport, is like life itself;
And Victory is sweet, once you've tasted it;
At Waterloo, ^{now} the rugby boys were loyal;
Competition, Darwin said, is life itself.

THE guns were divilged, by the college armourey, ^{we}
Bull's-eye hit meant, ~~we'd~~ completed our mission.
We shot the day's eyes at twenty-five paces,
And laughed; we were yet bold and free;
Yes, carefree; the bombs and atomic fission
Were wonders of science for the young rascals.

AND yet our city grew with us, crammed
With her antique gentleness, and quiet days;
But with the ^{growth} urgent use of quartz and macadam
Her gentle and impulsive heart was killed;
Became the whorl of the bazaar's maze,
Joined for ever, to the hardware, the rupees, and the tin.

WICKED city lights, ringing the breakfast table,
The slant light reveals love turned to stone;
The blood of the zinnias in the glass bowl
Bathes the stark masonry of our Babel;
The headless torso at the table sits alone,
And through anxious windows, the stone dogs howl.

THE rubber bats have settled in the
old house
Of the steel-baron; black as tea-
leaves
His tangy smile, which has released
the civilising
Commodore, on unsuspecting villagers,
and the nobbled horse:
That in luck, with the unlucky
grieves,
For lost innocence, and the fever
rising.

AND even a thief shall be honoured
in this house
Filled with paper roses, under neon
lighting.
The telephone rings, and the magis-
trate speaks
To pronounce the dead, living, and
living, dead.
Magdotes have fouled the lorikeet's
fighting,
And guavas rot beside the high walls.

THE sewers of Port Said have in-
vaded this house, ~~my~~ ~~and~~
Rings the dinner gong, the under-
taker enters
In his severe clothes, and adds the
day's takings,
—The innocent dead, the time mows;
Sits down to dinner with the dis-
senters.
Who have joined him tonight; who
are with him now.

AND so, there's terror today in the
old house:
Steel flowers burgeon in Colombo
Harbour.
World's dither has come through the
wires,
And her delicate side, Time's ex-
plosion blows;
Breached is the peaceful mind, and
antique arbour.
The old terrors ~~now~~ in new fires.

IT'S ancient the theme; competition,
strife;
Remember it in my friend, Basil
Wright's
"Song of Ceylon?" The tranquil
Buddha
Wo. shipped in green glades, and then
knife
That suddenly descended; the noise,
the stabbing lights
Of the bazaar's squabble and thunder:

AND the city humming on its con-
crete axis.
And so without presuming to be exact,
And mindful of advantages the days
bring,
I mourn the passing of an age, when
the bases
Of our lives were intact, and each act
Sprang from ancestral grace, and
sound living.

THAT was the grace, we found in
the green wood, ~~but~~ ~~high~~
When kindness spurted like milk from
each bosom;
The natural traffic of man, beast and
child
Set in the ancient tope, and village
good;
But with the mid-century's turning,
we saw the season
Change her decent pace; saw it for
treason.

YET all one loves quickly changes;
We feel deceived, under new
pressure;
In strange beds the old rivers lie.
And a new direction, the loved pat-
tern dis-arranges;
In the whirlpool is sucked heart's
treasure;
And then you fade, you fade alone,
and die.

CLOSENBURG, CEYLON

A bit further down, it's land's end;
Here on the toasting, curving beach of Galle,
Looping whitely and serenely southwards,
Many a trader and marauder like a gull
Settled for a while on this rocky escarpment,
Grubbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rock-crabs
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly:
Shells, like bassia flowers and melon seeds,
And stronger tints on the conch's belly
Flaunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;
The tepid sea's an acid-green like nelli.

The viridian palms frame caste caste^{ed} Closeenburg -
The sea-salt dream of a fierce old sea captain;
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous ~~the~~ windows
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water
Is a rug, squat Closeenburg is wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off, a buggalow
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and silver ships,
And the heart wishes the round world were mine,
To toss to you across the ~~windy water~~ apple water,
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

TAMBIMUTTU

*Illustrated
Weekly.*

CANNA

July 28 1911

There was a day when you were in
love,

And the canna heads came tumbling
down;

There was a day when the tempestuous
heart

Was a riot of colour, in the drab town;
And as they vanished, bright colours
fading,

Those trellised eyes faded and
drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair, fading,
And ocean liner, over the sky line,
Days, hands, lips vanished;

There was nothing there that was
mine.

The canna grew again in the same bed,
Dear flesh, beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of
canna,

Ring the tinted heads, by the gold
coast,

—Straight assegai of the passionate
garden,

Intricate growth of the heart's thirst;
The fulfilment and the resurrection
Of the unlucky, and the lost.

TAMBIMUTTU

EPITALAMIC LINES TO HANEEF AND ZAHRA

Now, at last, the splendid rain is falling
And the nughty earth is spoiled with kissing
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye
~~Now~~ With its raven breast and duskier wings;
And he, no longer, has his rambling wishes,
The joining rain has nestled in his eye.

Oh bless the summer of this sapling c untry
And praise the marriage of tangle, corn and fern;
IN every well there is a reflection,
In every tangled heart a shaft for entry;
Now you have proved it, dears, may nations learn,
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zahra
Slim citnara, chiming with bird and sandalwood,
In your black hair you secreted the waterwall,
Stole the butterfly sunlight from the branches;
Your sun-bathed body, my dear, is India,
In your new love I wish you as fierce a hunger.

Now as monsoon drops on tope and cottage path
And strange new shafts of light carve a new world's face,
Loves hammer rings on the mountain-sidehead;
There is glory in each bird-breast.
I send you my wishes and my praise,
For only dreaming and the love, is actual.

Of the morning.
Bind us in
With the spring.
The falling dust:
And
Heavy with your crooked
O make us grow.
The falling dust:
And
Heavy with your crooked
O make us grow.

Rhymes of the Timés

GALLE FACE GREEN

(February 5 1951)

In the morning haze, sky and sea,
uniform,
The bobbing faces and silk unbrel-
las gay;
The paper windmill seller covered
with wheels
Of whirling colour from head to
foot, warns
Sloe-eyed girls and brats it's
a great day,
And life's exactly what one feels.
Offshore, the Vijaya's hull,
ash-grey,
Look! Now changing to a powder
blue!
From the sky's traffic stealing
colour
For children's wonder, on this
fine day!
Humped chameleon stuck in the
ocean's glue,

Nation's servant: the morning's
jeweller.

Far off the ships converge on
trade routes,
Their holds full of some Ceylon
sun, perhaps,
Their goal Cathay, or some small
Pacific port,
Floating down with timbers,
resins, fruits,
Jutes, teas, coriander; but by
drum-taps
We float today a different kind
of boat,

A magic-boat, if you will, for our
children;
From such modest launchings
were Armadas fuelled,
Arrogant Troys taken, and
Americas filled,
And England Dunkirk saved from
the savage cauldron;
It is our boat of freedom!
clapped, belled,
To open sea! And to the future
willed.

Freedom is also what one makes
it;

As I see these young cadets,
march by
With their elder brothers, their
faces brushed
By the free air, their eyes lit
With a new light, and as the
Vampires fly
In cohort with Brigands and
Lancasters, I am impressed.

Common Wealth, Fraternity,
Equality will save us all.
These English faces are just, and
old, and ours
Turned to the sun will shine yet
with the old wisdom.
Today I saw a young child by
Galle Face call
To his Freedom, locked in the old
book's covers—
Bless, O bless his birthright, and
beautiful kingdom.

T.

ELARA

THERE were many voices
echoing through the wood,
And all depended on a single
word.

Elara, you chose without think-
ing

The way the koel and the ocean
sing:

Chose to meet strife, man to man,
The way the roots and the rivers
run.

With Duttha Gamini, you fought
man to man,

And died as justly as you lived;
To save life was ever your plan.
And you died, as you lived, a good
man.

The armies were saved, but you
Elara, died.

But lived in legend, Tamba-
panni's pride.

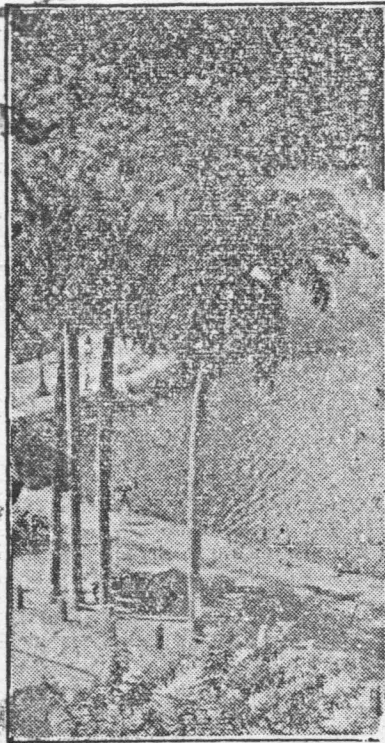
T.

And coo
Into the pool of
The chaos of ho
Bind us in the pool of
With the splendia rose!
Of the morning.
Lined to the roots, the fire,
The falling dust;
Heavy with your proffered tears
O make us grow.

Tambimuttu

Rhymes of the Times

KANDY LAKE



IT'S peaceful here, by the constructed lake.
Buildings sit on the water, and ripples break
On an ornamental wall, forced with triangles,
Which declare it Kandyan. Jingles
Of fussy trees, make a bright border,
And the stentorian cabbage-palm routs the disorder.
Cassia's candelabra hang yellow, and the rain tree
Thrusts its coral whiskers at the powder-blue sky.
The garden at the southern end is a Persian carpet.
Rare like cobra's diamond, and famous as a song-hit.
I envy these nut-brown children tumbling down the red road,
Their school must be near heaven, on the sloping hill's side.
Slender as the lake's reeds, and tense like the sun's heat,
This is the elfin kingdom, they inherit.
They say sloe-eyed princesses once dreamed on that island,
And also a mother drowned there, quite out of mind.
Dark and light, the waters, their ancient secrets keep,
Surface moves and ripples on the edge of sleep. T.

And cooibure
Into the pool of tears
The chros of hours,
Bind us in the pool of tears
With the splendid rose,
Of the morning.
Rized to the roots, the fire, the rain,
The falling dust;
Heavy with your proffered tears
O make us grow.

MADHU, CEYLON

Emblem of faith, set in the sun-wounded wood
Of red palu, and longan, tasting ~~of~~ like skinned grape;
Here the Faithful think of eternal good
And bathe in a river full of water lilies.
The journey was full of dust and flies,
And nights haunted with mutterings and leopard's roar,
But by the camp-fires they said their beads
And dined well off the jungle plum and wild boar;
And arrived at Madhu, in the jungle's recesses,
Found the ~~junc~~ journey had been good and revealing:
What it is the search and trouble blesses,
What binds the heart, and what the wood-nymphs bring.

MY COUNTRY, MY VILLAGE

When I was young, the flame-tree and the jasmin,
 Gilded my youthful eyes with tenderness,
 For natural things - the lotus-pond and the palmyrah:
 The ring dove tore the air with natural passion;
 At Atchuvely, my Northern home, all else
 Seemed unimportant beside a bassia*star.

The carrion eagle atop the rambling lanes
 Wheeled in the pastel sky, and a big owl
 Dozed in a tree beside the tethered cow;
 The goat coughed among the pecking hens
 Of which I owned two, three; and morning's haul
 Of eggs belonged to me, they said, for supper.

I had a goat too, a cow and Lakshmi,
 Gentle, big-eyed mongrel of a dog;
 And when she died I did not feel like supper -
 And there was Aachi, wrinkled kind old Aachi,
 At six, she told us stories about a frog
 In a well: food slipped down like sweetened milk and guava.

Around our house the mango shoots were pink;
 The big bassia dropped its blossom like snow.
 The pomegranate spun its exciting wheel
 Against the dropcloth off palmyrah mink;
 Between the oleander's and trumpet-lily's show
 Pencil of grey arecanut, was wire of steel.

I was four or five, and grand-father, the poet,
 In turban of gold and coat of black was a prince
 Who was kind to us; he flicked the coiled whip,
 And off we went down limestone white roads
 Fringed with lantana eyes; from prints
 He cut us paper dolls, with a clever snip.

Remember evenings in the theatre, his plays
 Like Kalidasa's full of dance and song;
 (My father once taking the leading role,
 Great-uncle Thambar dancing with a painted face,
 Agile as Nijinsky); his poems, a gong,
 Stung me to listen, to the metric's whirl.

All this was ^{home} heem, and we were self-contained;
 Our fields provided grain, tobacco, shallots:
 Garlic, pepper, bay-leaves, ginger, saffron:
 Yams, greens, herbs, fruits famed
 For delicacy and flavour. The seas filled with pots
 And nets, rang in the whole sea's kingdom.

26

This was long ago. And there was home
Beside the Eastern harbour full of ships,
And pretty shells on the deserted lunar beach;
Goat's-foot underfoot, and a lyric poem
In the screw-pine smell. The harbour lips
Enclosed a town beyond the railroad's reach.

There was peace in Trinco jungles too:
With leopard, deer and buffalo, I roamed
The jungle paths with Autie, and my brothers;
And beyond were the dead cities, the clue
To ancient hubbub, now be-calmed,
- All the mighty dead Anuradhapuras.

Colombo, ah, Colombo: Excrescence of Trade,
Competition, Endeavour - the pattern did not hold;
Chaos of many patterns, amorphous,
- The island's harlot, and Empire's accolade
In those days; still you were home, a mould
That shaped me in the Western swirl and rush.

Colombo was home indeed. The silver lights
Etched the night's dark with fauns and delicate shapes,
The streets magical by the half-light;
And when the moon dispelled the grey nights,
Silver palms stood by elfin capes,
Proud and feminine in their lissom flight.

All this we loved, my friends, Noel, Rowan,
Tissa (a young school of friends);
All this was heaven, until we grew,
And learnt the dog bit, the moon was ruin,
The gilt wore off, and all that magic lends
Is a false perspective, with the chocolate-box view.

And there was Nuwara Eliya, the new found ~~escape~~ escape
With a trout stream in the well-kept park;
Upcoot, Haputale, Maskeliya knew few rivals,
But, alas, the concrete base and rubber crepe
Brought my village, all villages to mind, from far dark:
Self-contained, these knew no rivals.

So on this festive day, with bells and bunting,
I am wondering whether the hectic pace
Will give the peace and plenty that we seek;
Whether the brash plane and limousine affronting
Shiva in the wooden cart, can grace,
Or start a new tear, on the ancient cheek.

Whether it's better to adorn the top or bottom,
To increase the village round, and soul's girth,
Or roundly add to the world's hue and cry,
- The bazaar's cheating and the traffic's hum;
But, this is my island, this my native earth
That bore me gently from a woman's sigh.

Her eye a blackbird among the tumbling bushes,
Her lashes, the black silk of a deep night,
Her body the pure long scarf of Laxapana, ‡
Lights of an ocean liner in her tresses, *
Black tresses, filled with dark and light;
Cry, O Cry, Namo, Namo, Matha. *

TAMBIMUTTU.

This poem was written for the Third Independence Day Celebrations in Ceylon.

X An Indian tree,

‡ A waterfall in Ceylon.

* "Glory to thy Name, O Mother" (Ceylon National Song).

Rhymes of the Times

The middle way

"Ceylon will continue to follow the middle way in the field of international relations."—P.M. in London.

You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.
 But in the end we must make the choice;
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

The world's contracting into a chocolate tray,
 And neutrality too we know must pay a price;
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.

Your task is grave and fateful, we pray
 Your usual wisdom will quiet the impetuous voice;
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

Quiet, awhile, while atomic furies bray
 And red anger the bowed heart annoys;
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.

Today is indeed, for man, a grey day,
 But in the end we must make the choice;
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

Good luck, sir, and may your wisdom's sway
 Shine in the rhetoric and noise;
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way,
 And for Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

T.

Some English pioneer saw this green bowl
A century ago, and bought it for a song;
He liked the climate, and the green mosses
That sternly reminded him of home;
He must have been a poet, I think, ~~it~~ to come here,
To a solitary grandeur that was private, and his own.

And now, by the closely cropped and shaved gold links
With a wooden bridge that thrusts across the stream
Like a root; the dark-green cypresses
With their needle leaves, and aromatic cone,
With the suave park, and fish filled lake,
Make a geometric and crystal landscape.

Black on red, and tan on gold, the sarees
Sport like spring tints on the race-course;
Sita looks pretty and petite
And Rohini's eyes shine in the swirling light
While Aru is totting up his bets
And jovial club-men have morning noon.

The holiday city ~~is~~ dreams among the hills,
And day blows cool in the fuschia bells.

N E H R U

He is the Great Indian!
 You Eastern sir, among the world's leaders,

With Churchill, a master of the English tongue;

Your words precise as apples, *every word is green* and lush as cedars —

In your Glimpses of World History, one

In pure style, with Churchill, Burke, *the Ramayana* Disraeli, Gibbon;

Teach the world's leaders to choose their words with care,

'Foresight' is not 'Appeasement', *and* 'Strength', 'The Bomb',

'Indecision' is not 'Rejection', as you say, sir,

Common Wealth the goal, not only of Ceylon,

But America, England, all things that are born!

Teach us to choose right in this terrible moment,

Lover of Peace, brave voice of Torment.

Tambimuttu.

Rhymes of the Times

PAALAI OOTHU

THERE'S a grotto in the heart
of the jungle
Where the Madonna's blue with
the emerald mingles.
Pilgrims are fervent in the nave
of rollicking breeze
Fringed by the Gothic pillars of
ancient trees.
The sky's roof protects the open-
air church
All that prays here the angels
bless.
It is faith, we know, that makes
eyes to flower
Limbs to levitate, and birds to
hover.
Stars in their courses, protect
the fervent wish
All things are real in the heart's
mesh.
This jungle sanctuary of the be-
lieving mind
Seems the jungle's vision, and all
else blind.
The well is deep, where the pil-
grims draw water
In their pots cook their hard
days, and the softer
Molluscs from China Bay. They
are ecstatic
Under thatched shed, or by the
tree's crutch.
What is unreal in this place?
Nothing, nothing
The birds make nests, and the
pilgrims sing.
Slee-eyed children are lost in
guava groves
Deserted by a planter who died,
long ago.
The Caffir settlement in, the
jungle hermitage
Where lope hunters with their
ancient lineage
Fills their eyes with envy for
the simple life
But their hearts know now a
new love.
If you go there, you'll still see,
my friend
How I carved my name on the
jungle-oak's BRANCH.

T.

Rhymes of the Times

UPCOT

HERE by the Maskeliyan range
The mist descends like a
cloak,
Shuts out the exotic and strange
And by the fire, you read a book.
When it lifts, rambler beans and
white roses
Round the pergola kiss and
twine;
The gay hydrangea surprises
You, under the sun.
Hills stretch out to the horizon,
Covered with dark curls of
bushes,
And mind's the terrible prison
That leaves blank all the pages.
Water-spouts in profusion
Adorn each valley and hill;
And the sun in his high heaven
Shines in a mossy pool.

T.

1951

RAMPUR.

Elephant grass is receding, and Elephants
No longer trumpet by the cottage door,
But the blazing sun the charming breeze
Descend on Rampur as of yore
The city like a warren, pocked with flies
Sizzles with heat, and the mart's barter;
The Prophet's Faithful dream of Medina
Or Mecca, desert and laughter
Long caravans from Shiraz and Baghdad
Found rest on the flat and hot plains
A prison-like Zenana and a palace
Look down on this people with disdain
The strange mosaic dwindles in the evening
To a singular and magic pearl,
The pearl of the minarets of Shiraz
A rose-tinted and fiery Persian girl.

Sirdar's Wedding.
23rd April 1952.

The Sirdar is hooked now in sweltering weather,
May his tribe increase like old Abou Ben Adem's.
Taj-ul-Muluk will sparkle today like champak
And they will view the sizzling world together
With equanimity, and find it heaven
In hot Madras where the birds tic-toc
In the ragged trees, and you are thunderstruck!

May the lively time and place be your chaplet
To Crown this Kingdom of Love you have now found;
May your gardens, children, be full of roses,
And your paths, my dears, always sunlit.
This is my wish, clear, tranquil and profound,
May happiness well for you from the leaves and posies!

SRINAGAR.

Will you rest now on the mountain's breast
Where the pencil poplars poise beside the lake?
Where bladder-wort hearts float like houseboats
On the dark water charged with human passion
Whereon the bum-boat men and the sun promote
Their ups and downs with slow precision.

Falls rock on rock and birds down to the lake
In the trees' tracery the weaver's hand is caught.
Tissues of electric silk and dull pashmina
Sport what cool gardens have brought forth
Leaves, tendrils, orioles, Kashmiri roses
That have embroidered the distant and green North.
In the willows, a jeweller's hand is hid
To vie with the fly-catcher and swartdragon-fly;
Kind-fishers have caught the green lake
Pressed her in between the zaffran and rye
Roses grow on the pashmina shawls
And the high Himalayas hoists up the sky.

=====

Shrimati Dineshnandini Dalmia

[Shrimati Dineshnandini Dalmia is a well-known Hindi poetess, who has published a dozen volumes of prose-lyrics and verse. A critic of note has described them as "authentic, set in the Indian mood and tradition, precise in the manner of Mohammed Iqbal rather than in the style of Tagore". The sequence of poems we give here has been translated by Tambimuttu, former editor of "Poetry London".]

I

O Weaver of Garlands, do not pierce these half-blown blossoms,
Because the kiss of bees has soiled them;
Do not put the soft green grasses in my basket
Because the drops of dew have made them wet;
My God will not accept these Bel-leaves also,
Because the taint of air pervades them;
My deity needs virgin gifts;
Flower-gatherer, do not pierce these bakul-buds.

II

The stars went out, one by one, yet day broke not,
In the blind court-yard of old age, Life flickered;
Obscene shadow-pictures of fleeting youth flashed across
The swart screen of death; frightening the dying man.
Bright streaks of the future showed in the dreaming eyes of the
past;

The flickering "dipak" went out,

The stars went out,
there was no end tonight.

III

If I find you in the turgid hours of empty youth,
 I'll chain the sun, and keep it hid for aeons in the net of my saree;
 I'll make the world sleep, till I can forget the pain of separation:
 Shelter hungry Death behind the curtain of the un-resolved,
 —Nourish her on the hot blood of my heart.
 If I own you, just once, I will renew the crooked ways of the
 Creator,
 Become the puzzle, myself!

IV

Will the world forget your beauty that enchants the three worlds,
 holy memories! or my deep and boundless love—
 You on heavenly Ganges' bosom, in Indra's garden floating, blue
 lotus!
 And I its sandal-scented breeze, stricken liquid shadow, and light's
 broken ray

When in the full-blown evening, the sun on mountain-tops
 Sets loose torrents of light;
 Folds the oriole of rays in the apron of sky;
 When the lotus, closing aromatic petals, is quiescent on the still
 waters of the tank after the day's heat
 When the peacock, that expert dancer among birds, weaves rain-
 bow colours of sunset in the crescent-eyes of its tail-feathers,
 Feels drowsy, seeks rest on a high branch, thick with leaves;
 Then,
 My love, coming softly, hide yourself between my breasts,
 Where your worn-out soul and scorched body
 Shall find renewal and peace
 Up to the rising of the gold sun.

VI

Idol! Love me, or spurn me,
 Your worship is my creed, to sing your praise in the assembly of
 poets, my calling,
 Your beauty is the lamp of my "Shiva-laya".
 To me, you are the light Moses saw on Horab's Mount,
 Your slavery, the eternal lease-deed of my luck;
 To follow in your footsteps is my Kashi and Brindaban, my Mecca
 and my Medina:
 To water your garden with the life-stream of my heart, my wish;
 To die in dedication to your memory, laughing, my highest mark
 of distinction!
 Idol, love me, or spurn me....

VII

How does my Heart-beat live in your absence?
 The stars catch fire without oil;
 Anxiety burns without a heaped-up pyre,
 Blazing death-fires extinguish without dousing,
 And beautiful subtle creation goes on, without substance;
 The programme of death works according to the rules,
 Though the prompter remains unseen;
 And so persists my Heart-beat without you.

VIII

Before the gates of Nanda's palace, Vrishnabanu's daughter paused
 and prayed:

"O sleeping world's protecting tuskers of the ten directions
 That sweet couch protect:
 Resting on which, my infatuated love dreams of me!"

IX

Alas! On the princess' tomb now,
 Earth but the soft grass and flowers offers;
 The breeze presents the several perfumes
 And moon and stars only, light the lamps
 —And heaven weeps tears of dew.

X

"Who was she—Dinesh?"
 When the world ages, someone may ask.
 The touching, quiet beauty of centuries will trip in and vanish,
 And free manhood, infinite youth, and palsied age will disappear
 shyly;
 But bright love's scented ray, world's broken, divine existence will
 suffuse with colour;
 Then, when the world ages, someone may ask
 "Who was she—Dinesh?"

D E I T Y

Mysterious ayoha, ayoha

Without lips, hearts or membranes

On the high mountain tops:

Eating your passion smoothly

Like oil, nuts, ^{gaps}~~figs~~, oranges.

The heart is a gape the breezes enter

With the running water and the beat of tides—

On barren shore, the winding

~~Running~~

~~Running~~ stair of white sand to somewhere.

Fill the valleys with song and smother

The hearts, lakes, stars with diamonds

— Old is your sacred song.

THE ONLY REALITY

The holy loves that flower in the dark
Subside into the wet jewels of night
Quietly and without much fuss.

The trains come and go like visitors
To an open house all day,
With great commotion.

The bustle in our hooded hearts
The splitting of the city and the vibration
are parallel and the same.

The quiet pool lies where reeds bend
The suns flow
And the rooms are entered.

Tamara Mitchell

THE SPREADING CROSS.

Where, where will we find us after wreck,
 Deep river, sand or shallow?
 After the city is spsain and the thin laughter
 Of mouldy bone echoing in corners; after swallow
 Of stick and stone are mixed in slaughter;
 After the memories, memorials— and after
 Where, will we find us after wreck?

After the burst of treaties and brute splendour
 Loud on the slaughter bleeding empty stone;
 When our sharp loves are blunted like night
 Forking nowhere, and wind distractedly pulls bone from bone;
 When the pulse is slow and thorned, the lips tight
 And angry fires are loading another fight
 Where will we find us after wreck?

The clouds of fear are silently assembled above
 this night

To disappear in soft immersion in the cavern heart.

The seven-voiced guns are talking fast again
 And again and again the planes return to London
 The start

This of the spreading cross and pain;

But when the floods come and doves return
Where will we find us after wreck?

A simple book of his, the awful other's want,
A little mercy on the clean surgeon's knife
Would have avoided all this. Who can say?
Today the cars of war run only when life
Is stranded for reason. And when the day
Of reckoning descends and someone, perhaps he,
the other has to pay —

Where will we find us after wreck?

Life is not single or double but like an ocean
Drawn round the earth on meeting floors.

(Movement in the local place disturbs the love-beds all)

Hunger and anger are not indigenous but spread like
sores

Across the earth from Washington to Calcutta.

But when the pall

Of smoke and ~~fire~~ lies is lifted and the
deceivers fall, all,

Where will we find us after wreck?

These are the things we must think of. Tonight
the bowl air is taut.

The points of flame about the plane are
two angers meeting;

But they will break each other

And our hot anger dying

What we must love or fight or hate about

Is when the bombs and bands are ushered out

Where O where will we find us after wreck?

ocean

beds all

like

ta.

the

Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water,
 With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,
 People setting out for far places
 Come here to roost, and faster
 The engines hum, and with their groning
 Is born a new sea laughter.

The bum-boats have carried a man's dreams
 For thirty years, on this oily water,
 The spidery masts got caught in his hair,
 His eyes laced with rigging and ship-beams;
 With life's eternal compromise and barter
 In 900 B.C. he was still our harbour.

And so they tack and sail and go away,
 Or drown from this spot, that is the world's and ours.
 And when eyes dream of other islands,
 Lay your sleeping head here, and stay
 A while; think Colombo Harbour's
 Our own, with sound and silence.

Kortenaar-on-the-Hill was a childhood symbol
 Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish:
 Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers
 Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple.
 The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.
 A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.

Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water,
 With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,
 People setting out for far places
 Come here to roost, and faster
 The engines hum, and with their growling
 Is born a new sea laughter.

The bum-boats have carried a man's dreams
 For thirty years, on this oily water,
 The spidery masts got caught in his hair,
 His eyes laced with rigging and ship-beams;
 With life's eternal compromise and barter
 In 900 B.C. he was still our harbour.

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 Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers
 Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple.
 The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.
 A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.

ATCHUVELY For My Grandfather.

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe
 In a perfect sonnet for his darling's praise
 In her lemon arms thrust the jujube and mango,
 The shir's plenty and ancestral grace;
 Plucked her the magic islands of the West,
 Kayts, Hammenhiel, all those places
 Long disappeared now, in the sea's depths.
 Where starfish with the turtle races.
 Clattered the passionate stars over Atchuvety,
 His heart beat faster in each sheer song:
 The Thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering
 neem tree

And now he's gone the lanes his secret keep,
 His moods beat down shadowy and strong,
 And in the bassia grove the Orioles weep.

POLONNARUWA.

When there is no more to write, it is best to sleep
 There is no rest, no hand-shakes, weep, weep
 As the tired breezes round the lattice creep
 And the pool wears out the stone and nerves break,
 A heart has a history, like this stone place
 Dreaming Polonnarwa give us your great peace.
 Speak, speak, of the warm light in each face
 That blessed you, my city, my beautiful one,
 My flowers of stone, dear city, when you alone
 Gave to the child this stupa, this pillar, this Siva
 Sleep, sleep, with your broken eye, and have long rest
 And hold the ~~fast~~ birds fast in your green nest.
 Fast.

MANIPAY.

To many, Manipay is but a name
 Where their ancestors killed and brought forth
 Where old houses with broad verandahs
 Multiplied the families of great worth:
 Where they studied 'Maniyampathiyar Santhathi Mural'
 To praise the ante-cedents of each birth

Cultivated, conservative, progressive,
 Beyond their time and condition:

The scholar Gnanaprakasam, the Mathers.

The greatness of Coomaraswamy at Boston,
 Ramanathan, Arunachalam, the statesmen;
 Emigrants to Malaya, France, or London

Something precious was born in Manipay
 Behind the stone walls and thatch fences:
 Bold as sparrows, bright-eyed as robins,
 Whole and undivided, their fancies.
 They found order under the mind's
 Precise and glittering lenses.

So let us go down to antique Manipay
 The spring of so much good endeavour;
 Where the peacock flower was all flame and golden.
 And there were peacocks once in that shady bower
 Where silk rustled, and be-jewelled hands
 Blessed you and stole you for ever.

Villanelle for the old year.

The old year's dying on our native hills,
 Remember your gala night at the Golden Fawn?
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.
 The memory fails and the passion chills,
 And a new year falters now someone has gone,
 The old year's dying on our native hills.

Pictures are fading, the worn heart mulls
 Now the old days have swiftly flown;
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills
 It is the crowded story that stills
 The bowed head and the crimsoning dawn
 The old year's dying on our native hills

The year's memories sing in silver hills
 Over the mind's quiet secluded lawn;
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills
 And grateful too for the happy times, the thrills
 The weathers, the loving and the corn;
 The old year's dying on our native hills
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.

Villanelle

We won't find peace in the language of war or threats.
Jawaharlal Nehru.

We won't find peace in the language of war,
I have seen homes on fire like gorse;
We live today under an evil star.

September 'Thirty Nine heard the passions roar,
Friends faded and passed with ^{the} autumn rose;
We won't find peace in the language of war.

They dropped down dead in the crowded bar
The bomb's fierce message was sure and terse;
We won't find peace in the language of war.

All was in flame, blood, hair and tar,
And lovers knew what death owes;
We live today under an evil star.

Dunkirk, Warsaw, Arnhem, brave Malta,
Remember all this and worse;
We won't find peace in the language of war:
We live today under an evil star.

Horton Place.

Here where hands are jewelled, and the pace faster,
 High walls protect you from sudden disaster.
 The evening face is becalmed on the Stud Book
 And painted eyes fix you with a bold look,
 On the shaved lawn, the enamelled flower pots,
 Check-by-jowl with Mother's noisy ducks,
 Spark through evening gloom the patch-work scene,
 And under the porch sits an amazing limousine
 Among the brass jardinières Mother's laughter tinkles,
 And the girls are pretty in their plastic wimples,
 Son's been wonderful this month at cricket,
 And Father dreams of Duleep, Hobbs and Ranjit,
 Dreams of Kent and hops, and an English morning
 When the pitch was soft, his strokes - a Worrell's adorning
 When life, was play according to the book's rules,
 And young days sparkled, glowed like bright jewels.
 Horton Place, today is gay with his laughter,
 He has gone, with the flowers; (but sunbirds;
~~but~~ with his love murmur.

After a death.

He is someone I never met
 A streak in the sky that flushed and passed
 Cypress and myrtle now bind his head
 He is at rest
 From the striving and struggle, a heart stood still
 His fires burn, still in the native wood;
 The equable voice will sound no more
 Remember the good.

And so the sea-spume and rocks vanish
 And the memory remains
 All right endeavour is lasting
 Blessed by the rains.

Malte

In Bombay, where the small shadows creep
 To Salsette Island which reminds me of Ceylon,
 There lies Malte, the most perfect country
 Wedded in bliss to sea-mews, sun and song
 All night long, the sea-swell in her eyes,
 Speaks of merchants, princes, ships
 The magic of natural peaceful waters
 And the warm bays of her Indian lips.
 Under the sun, all things are vernal
 - Malte dreams in the criss-cross light
 A haven of dark-eyed, heaving waters,
 And the delight of my wondering eyes.

The Writer

He is the black song that will trouble
 The bround acres to a double flow,
 Gold, corn, iron, all that the land yields
 All that is musical and vernal, all that binds and sets loose
 Sets stock for winter and for summer pleasure,
 Setting the fine-spun necklace of bird sound on the dark throat
 And in the black braided hair the vermillion of his lips,
 Eyes, arms, nostrills, the finger-tips assaying
 The impossible and the feasible feats
 Straight cypress in the exotic setting
 Flamboyante and jessamine assisting the startled eyes;
 In the shapeless growth of sudden tropic life,
 In the formlessness, a low insistent note
 Banging the god in, his quiver full of bright steel
 His loins of vibration and his eyes of vengeance:

Spawn of God, poet, scattered to the four winds
 Of the Crucifix! You swell the bush, the rock and the burn,
 — Forever lonely.

Reveal Her

Reveal her, raze her flat to the ground
 The white kernel rigid to the teeth.
 And the airs of heaven drift into the hole
 The hole of heaven.

Heaven is in our faces, blowing,
 With the slap and drift of water.
 Dull on the smooth stone
 Eaten with passion.

Heaven is where the colours cross
 And the waters meet.

Drift, drift into the water
 Where the roles mix.

The swallow tumbles into the pool

And the willow kiss.

Heaven is where the angels wink

And tents are entered strongly.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep a fresh love's long since-cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances forgone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan
Which I now pay as if not paid before:

—But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

W. Shakespeare

CORPUS CHRISTI CAROL

Lullay, Lullay, Lullay, Lullay,
The falcon hath borne my make away

He bore him up, he bore him down
And bore him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was an hall,
That was hangéd with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed;
It was hangéd with gold so red.

And there in that bed there lieth a knight,
His ~~wound~~ wounde is bleeding day and night.

By that bed's side there kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth both night and day.

And by that bed's side there standeth a stone
Corpus Christi written thereon.

C A N N A

There was a day when you were in love,
And the canna heads came tumbling down;
There was a day when the tempestuous heart
Was a riot of colour, in the drab town;
And as they vanished, bright colours fading,
Those trellised eyes faded and drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair, fading,
And ocean liner, over the sky line,
Days, hands, lips vanished;
There was nothing there that was mine,
The canna grew again in the same bed,
Dear flesh, beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of canna,
Ring the tinted heads, by the gold coast,
- Straight assegai of the passionate garden,
Intimate growth of the heart's thirst;
The fulfilment and the resurrection
Of the unlucky, and the lost.

Tambimuttu

J A F F N A

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences.
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikset,
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauna %
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?
Lone by strange Fort Hammanhiel
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northernmost Point Pedro, the spanking
North-Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips -
Dusty tulip-trees of the the maiden,
To many their childhood toy and julep!
Remember the fruit that were the play-tops
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape;
Gothic cathedrals of palmyrahs, doves.
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo
And pensive stork that memory adores;
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to those,
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

Tambimuttu

% manor house.

IN THE COUNTRY

In the eyelids' shade the rocks grow
Into the other rock I've left behind
Manhattan, Manhattan
Where the cocks grow and the rocks rock
The baby to sleep.

TAMBIMUTTU

6.v.64

HARI SRIVASTAVA

The following poem Tambi wrote and composed hurriedly in the office of the Boat House Club, Nainital, and typed it out on its typewriter, and presented it to me on the occasion of my thirty-fourth birthday on 24th July, 1952.

NAINITAL

(FOR HARI, ON HIS THIRTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY)

None of us can escape magic; from time to time
The forest opens into a clear lake,
With boats and youths, and the heart opens
Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.
Here at Naini Tal where I have found peace
On the swan's breast, and the lit rooms of her eyes,
I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,
And the lake stretches intricate in the hills' maze.

A little love from time to time breaks through
The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle;
Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel
And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;
The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,
Marries the heart that's been difficult and single:
Drip-drop all feeling, colours, scents
Into a bright cup, that's now full.

To get here and to claim Naini Tal
As you would take a child to your breast,
To find the route that's both direct and certain,
To Great Northern Road to the peaceful beck and fell,
Is not so easy as we have heard told,
A simple remedy for our fears, pains and ills.

Remember Caliban in Regent's Park
One summer evening, when Kamala was the goal,
The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,
The servant-monster of a dark time;
Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,
Born of the split rock, and spilt wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived
From colourful India to his stark London:
The revolving doors of 'The Wheatsheaf' that let in
The weak and the ponderous, or the steadily wasting;
All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment
Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again.

Those were times we can never forget,
When the Casino's girls were lovelies, Sita an angel;
When the drum of the Caribbean swirled the beautiful dancers
And London's snow was a beating white gull;
Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly
Fell the beauty and the weariness in hand-fulls.

That was the old magic that gilded
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick,
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday
With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;
Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling
In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious;
When chiffon rustled in the throbbing rooms
And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:
Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles
Hung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,
With the smart picnics and woodland rambles;
Auden's slick statements lacked heart,
And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important;
Real with the blood's heat and brambles,
It made us pause, and have our doubts.

So on this 34th birthday at Naini Tal
Among these sonorous hills and delicate willows,
I hope a sudden light and a new beginning will surprise you,
Cover your darling's eyes and bright hair with kisses;
On the broad rippling lake the silver yachts float,
So may you trim and launch your dream-boats.

Tambimuttu

(Nainital, India - 24 July, 1952)

That was the old magic that gilded
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick,
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday
With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;
Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

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Tambimuttu

(Nainital, India - 24 July, 1952)

A MAP OF CEYLON

This is a Map of Ceylon to take with you,
Wherever you go, and near to your heart;
Wherever wells have dried, and wishes no longer
Chime with the clear beat;
Each raiding change makes day colder,
Each new departure, brings you where you started.

We begin at first with the hard growth of penna,
-Cockspur Thorn on the barren heath;
Where the rock breaks, the Tiger's Claw
Offers cabregoya useless fruit;
Moon-Plains they are called; Love's-Bress
With dry lichen and moss is lost.

And then the sudden fury of the rains
Lashed the hot eyes among the blue hills;
The rivers were in spate and the hills' eyes-
Ramboda, Laxapana- with butterflies was full;
Dropped down into the Ganga's throat,
To feed the salt birds and the shore's gulls.

Ceylon is always the map on your palm, look!
Burnt with the sun's needles and action's desiring;
That one, now, is the Mount of Adam,
And this, the river, named The Great One;
Beyond the lines of luck and ill-luck, conspiring,
These are the things, in the end, that will bring you home.

EPITHALAMIUM FOR HANEEF AND ZAHRA

Now, at last, the splendid rain is falling
And the hungry earth is spoiled with kisses
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye
With its raven breast and duskier wings;
And he, no longer, has his rambling wishes
The joining rain has nestled in his eye.

Oh bless the summer of this sapling country
And praise the marriage of tangle, corn and fern;
In every well there is a reflection,
In every tangled heart a shaft for entry;
Now you have proved it, dears, may nations learn,
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zahra
Slim cithara, chiming with bird and sandalwood,
In your black hair you secreted the waterfall;
Stole the butterfly sunlight from the branches;
Your sun-bathed body, my dear, is India,
In your present love I wish you as fierce a hunger.

Now as monsoon drops on topdandd cottage path
And strange new shafts of light carve a new world race,
Loves hammer rings on the mountain-head,
There is glory in each bird-breast.
And I send you my wishes and my praise,
For only dreaming and the love, is actual.

CLOSENBURG

A bit further down, it's land's end;
Here on the toasting, curving beach of Galle,
Looping whitely and serenely southwards,
Many a trader and marauder like a gull
Settled for a while on this rocky escarpment,
Grubbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rock-crabs
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly;
Shells, like bassia flowers and melon seeds,
And stronger tints on the cunch's belly
Flaunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;
The tepid sea's an acid-green like nelli.

The viridian palms frame castellated Closenburf -
The sea-salt dream of a fierce old sea captain;
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous windows
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water
Is a rug, squat Closenburgis wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off, a buggalow
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and silver ships,
And the heart wishes the round world were mine,
To toss to you across the apple water,
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

JAFFNA

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences.
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet,
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walaawa
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?
Lone by strange Fort Hammenhiel
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From Northermost Point Pedro, the spanking
North-Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips-
Dusty tulip-trees of the maidan,
To many their childhood toy and julep!
Remember the fruit that were the play tops
Underneath the old school-houses burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape;
Gothic cathedrals of palmyrahs, doves.
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo
And pensive stork that memory adores;
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to these,
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

SH RINE IN THE JUNGLE; MADHU

Emblem of faith, set in the sun wounded wood
Of red palu, and longan, testing like skinned grape;
Here the Faithful think of eternal good
And bathe in a river full of water lilies.
The journey was full of dust and flies,
And nights haunted with mutterings and leopard's rear,
But by the camp-fires they said their beads
And dined well off the jungle plum and wild boar;
And arrived at Madhu, in the jungle's recesses,
Found the journey had been good and revealing:
What it is the search and trouble blesses,
What binds the heart, and what the wood-nymphs bring.

KANDY LAKE

It's peaceful here, by the constructed lake.
Buildings sit on the water, and
ripples break
On an ornamental wall pierced with triangles,
Which declare it Kandyan. Jingles
Of fussy trees, make a bright border,
And the stentorian cabbage-palm
routs the disorder.
Cassia's candelabra hang yellow,
and the rain tree
Thrusts its coral wisders at the powder-blue sky.
The garden at the southern
end is a Persian carpet.
Rare like cobra's diamond, and
famous as a song-hit.
I envy these nut-brown children
tumbling down the red road.
Their school must be near heaven,
on the sloping hills side.
Slender as the lake's reeds, and
tense like the sun's heat,
This is the elfin kingdom, they inherit.
They say aloe-eyed princesses
once dreamed on that island,
And also a mother drowned there,
quite out of mind.
Dark and light, the waters, their
ancient secrets keep,
Surface moves and ripples on the
edge of sleep.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling
 In NAINI TAL% starting a fire was delicious;
 When shifon rustled in the throbbing rooms,
 And (For Hari, on his thirty-fourth birthday)
 Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and sparkles
 I ung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

None of us can escape magic; from time to time
 The forest opens into a clear lake faded,
 With boats and youths, and the heart opens
 Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.
 Hers at Naini Tal where I have found peace
 on the swan's breast, and the litarooms of her eyes,
 I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,
 And the lake stretches intricate in the hills maze.

So on this thirty-fourth birthday at Naini Tal
 A little love from time to time breaks through
 The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle; I surprise you,
 Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel, the kisses;
 And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;
 The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,
 Marries the heart that's been difficult and single:
 Drip-drop all feeling, colours, scents
 Into a bright cup, that's now full.

So in Himalayan resorts,
 To get here, and to claim Naini Tal,
 As you would take a child to your breast,
 To find the route that's both direct and certain,
 The Great Northern Road to the peaceful beck and fell,
 Is not so easy as we have heard told,
 A simple remedy for our fears and ills.

Remember meeting Caliban in Regent's Park
 One summer evening, when Kamala was the goal;
 The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,
 The servant-monster of a dark time;
 Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,
 Born of the split rock, and spilt wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived
 From his colourful India to his stark London;
 The revolving doors of "The Wheatsheaf" that let in
 The weak and the Ponderous, or the steadily wasting;
 All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment
 Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again.

Those were times we can never forget,
 When the Casino's girl's were 'lovelies', Sita an angel;
 When the drum of 'The Caribbean' swirled the beautiful dancers,
 And London's snow was a beating white gull;
 Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly,
 Fell the weariness and beauty in hand-fulls.

That was the old magic that gilded
 The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick;
 When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday,
 With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;
 Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office
 And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling
 In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious;
 When chiffon rustled in the throbbing rooms,
 And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:
 Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles
 Hung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,
 With the smart picnics and woodland rambles;
 Auden's slick statements lacked heart,
 And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important;
 Real with the blood's heat and brambles,
 It made us pause, and have our doubts.

So on this thirty-fourth birthday at Naini Tal
 Among the sonorous hills and delicate willows,
 I hope a sudden light and the new beginning will surprise you,
 Cover your darling's hair and bright eyes with kisses;
 On the rippling broad lake the silver yachts float,
 So may you trim add launch your dream boats.

% Himalayan resort.

Is not so easy as we have heard told,
 A simple remedy for our fears and ills,
 The Great Northern Road to the peaceful backs and fell,
 Is not so easy as we have heard told,
 A simple remedy for our fears and ills.

Remember meeting Caliban in Regent's Park
 One summer evening, when Angela was the goal;
 The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,
 The servant-manner of a dark time;
 North-spirit with the dark yearning voice,
 Born of the split week, and spilt wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived
 From his colourful India to his stark London;
 The revolving doors of "The Wheatsheaf" that let in
 The weak and the Ponderous, or the steadily wasting;
 All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment
 Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again.

Those were times we can never forget,
 When the Casino's girl's were 'lovelies', Sita an angel;
 When the drum of 'The Caribbean' swirled the beautiful dancers,
 And London's snow was a beating white gull;
 Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly,
 Fell the weariness and beauty in head-falls.

That was the old magic that gilded
 The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick;
 When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday,
 With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;
 Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office
 And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

PAALAI OOTHU

There's a grotto in the heart
of the jungle
Where the Madonna's blue with
the emerald mingles.
Pilgrims are fervent in the nave
of rollicking breeze
Fringed by the Gothic pillars of ancient trees.
The sky's roof protects the opening church
All that prays here the angels bless.
It is faith, we know, that makes
eyes to flower
Limbs to levitate, and birds to hover.
Stars in their courses, protect
the fervent wish
All things are real in the heart's mesh.
This jungle sanctuary of the believing mind
Seems the jungle's vision, and all else blind.
The well is deep, where the pilgrims draw water
And in their pots cook their hard days, and the softer
Molluscs from China Bay.
They are ecstatic
Under thatched shed, or by the tree's crutch.
What is unreal in this place?
Nothing, nothing
The birds make nests, and the pilgrims sing.
Sleep-eyed children are lost in guava groves
Deserted by a planter who died, long ago.
The Caffir settlement in the jungle hermitage
Where lope hunters with their ancient lineage
Fills their eyes with envy for the simple life
But their hearts know now a new love.
If you go there, you'll still see, my friend
How I carved my name on the jungle-oak's trunk.

UPCOT

Here by the Maskeliyan range
The mist descends like a cloak,

Shuts out the exotic and strange
And by the fire, you read a book.
When it lifts, rambler beans and white roses

Round the pergola kiss and twine;

The gay hydrangea surprises
You, under the sun.

Hills stretch out to the horizon;
Covered with dark curls of bushes,

And mind's the terrible prison
That leaves blank all the pages.
Water-spouts in profusion
Adorn each valley and hill;

And the sun in his high heaven
Shines in a mossy pool.

SRINAGAR

Will you rest now on the mountain's breast
Where pencil poplars poise beside the lake?
Where bladder-wort hearts float like the houseboats
On dark water charged with human passion
Whereon the bum-boat men and sun promote
Their ups and downs with a slowpprecision.

Falls rock on rock and birds down go the lake
In the trees' tracery the weaver's hand is caught.
Tissues of electric silk and dull pashmina
Sport what cool gardens have brought forth
Leaves, tendrils, orioles, Kashmiri roses
Embroidering the distant and green North.

In the willows, a jeweller's hand is hid
To vie with the fly-catcher and swart dragon-fly:
Kind-fishers have caught the green lake
Caught her between the zaffron and rye
Roses grow on the pashmina shawls
And high the Himalayas hoist up the splendid sky.

COLUMBO HARBOR

Falls the darkness on this pathh of water,
With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,
People setting out for far places
Come here to roost, and faster
The engines hum, and with their groaning
Is born a new sea laughter.

The bus-boats have carried a man's dreams
For thirty years, on this oily water,
The spidery masts got caught in his hair,
His eyes laced with signing and ship-beams;
With life's eternal compromise and barter
In 900 B.C. she was still our harbor.

And so they tack and sail and go away,
Or drown from this spot, that is the world's and ours.
And when eyes dream of other islands,
Lay your sleeping head here, and stay
Awhile; think, Columbo Harbor's
Our own, with sound and silence.

Korteboom-on-the-Hill was a childhood symbol
Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish:
Tonight her strung lights reminds the voyagers
Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple
The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.
A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.

POLONNARUWA

When there is no more to write, it is best to sleep
There is no rest, no hand-shakes, weep, weep
As the tired breezes round the lattice creep
And the pool wears out the stone and nerves break
A heart has a history, like this ~~stone~~ place
Dreaming Polonnarwa give us your great peace.
Speak, speak of the warm light in each face
That blessed you, my city, my beautiful one,
My flowers of stone, dear city, when you alone
Gave to the child this stupa, this pillar, this Siva
Sleep, sleep, with your broken eye, and have long rest
And hold the frail birds fast in your green nest.

ATCHUVELY

(For my grandfather, Pulavar S. Tambimuttu Pillai)

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe
In a perfect sonnet for his darlings praise
In her lemon arms thrust the jujuba and mango,
The shire's plenty and ancestral grace;

Plucked her the magic islands of the West,
Kayts, Hammenhiel, all those places
Long disappeared now, in the seas depths
Where starfish with the turtle races
Clattered the passionate stars over Atchuvely,
His heart beat faster in each sheer song:
The thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering
neen tree.

And now he's gone the lanes his secret keep,
His moods beat down, shadowy and strong,
And in the bassia grove the orioles weep.

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross
In my unquiet mind
With your second birthday
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you
In these store-less, diffident woods:
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind
- Discloser of inexpressibles -
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirligig head
Reminds me of all the funny coiffures you affect.
It's a rose of many moods and faces, you'll see
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBIMUTTU

*I send you a carbon copy since the types
get clogged up when I make extra copies.*

*Yaddo,
Saratoga Springs
New York.*

POSTCARD FOR SHAKUNTALA, setat.2

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross
In my unquiet mind
With your second birthday
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you
In these store-less, diffident woods:
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind
- Discloser of inexpressibles -
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirligig head
Reminds me of all the funny coiffures you affect.
It's a rose of many moods and faces, you'll see
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBINUTTU

POSTCARD FOR SHAKUNTALA, setat.2

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross
In my unquiet mind
With your second birthday
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you
In these store-less, diffident woods;
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind
- Discloser of inexpressibles -
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirling head
Reminds me of all the funny coilfures you affect.
It's a rose of many moods and faces, you'll see
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBINTTU

REMEMBRANCE

Wisps
 of remembrance
 crisp
 whorls
 swirling
 and hovering
 importunate
 at the doorstep
 Fricasee
 of friable crockery
 and cracknel crumples
 brittle to the
 mind's feeble antennae
 and the urgent breath
 Then
 drifts
 curled and involuted
 tenuous
 whirled whistling
 and the stir
 of muslin
 softly sighing at your casements
 responsive to dimly familiar impacts
 Vague contact
 of the mind with old landmarks
 Luxuriant waddle
 in the puddles



Class No. RC.8
 Dec No. 15943
 Dr. Reg. 512
 TO MIRIAM

PREFACE

I have attempted in most of these poems to capture beauty of sound, and ingenuity of texture, in graceful, symmetrical sound-patterns, animated with thought.

From the few criticisms I have received, I am given to understand that I have abnormal hearing and vision but I naturally prefer to believe that this so-called abnormality is actually a higher sense. If any of these poems fail to please, my only excuse is that I have been a conscientious artist, paying the greatest attention to colour and tone and, most important of all, atmosphere. I believe that, in poems like "Monsoon" and "Remembrance," I have created the right atmosphere, and obtained a correct relation of light and shade, in thought and sound, and thus, truth of effect.

"L'Envoi", "Voices", "Mutability" and "Chanson" are earlier poems, and were written in the years 1932 and 1933. I have marked these poems with an asterisk.

Half these poems have been published before. I wish to thank the respective editors for permission to reprint.

M. J. T.

TONE-PATTERNS MEARY J. TAMBIMUTTU



COLOMBO

AT THE SLAVE ISLAND PRINTING WORKS

1936

of ancient scrub and stone and stubble
 Relaxation
 lapse of blood and muscle to lazy
 masturbation
 and then
 the squealing in the blast
 and onslaught
 of a baboon horde
 Lurch and roll and limbo
 the brake
 grates
 Shudder

FLOUNDER

My heart
 stumbled
 i met me
 as you ambled by
 I fumbled
 for the jumbled fumaroles
 of my heart
 I flounded and let
 a fulsome heat
 beat
 on a white lily
 Tiasco
 Forget
 a fool and his money

(6)

BAROQUE

Like an anthology of beautiful verse
 characterless undefined
 and a spectral disperse
 Toddlings of straw fingers
 in senseless clay, dull and bleary-eyed
 Then a newer dust, fresh and young
 and lisping in a savage tongue
 without a reason or a meaning
 yet scarce removed from dim divining
 a thought
 yet only an idea
 without a being and a limit
 Beauty—incomprehensible
 impalpable—yet enjoyable
 Pulchritude of smug ugliness
 yet only an idea
 silvering with uncertain light
 the yet unbroken obelisks of ancient beautiful art
 That's why on a beautiful moon-bright night
 my sleep is a cowed head in an assembly of stars
 for by your plainness is a mystery
 and you are twain beloved
 this baroque toy and you

(7)

EXPLANATION

Symphony woofing in a cell
snobbery in a pub
i and materialism
on this sordid crust

I will not coin for you from my mint of unreality
lest you seek untimely escape from this ephemeral coil
for this illusion of yours is too happy to be revealed
poor dear puppets of this little lively stage

To see you grapple with the empty future
sweat starting at every pore
believing in the exhalations of paleozoic madness
analysing your existence
putrid pleonasm in the understanding of life
doth jar mightily

The microbe and the fungus in their intellection
abhor theorizing life
they know, to be is to be
and they are

But you fritter away your time in unrealities
for your material mind
seeks, hope of material joy to be
joy is extinction

I, the microbe and the fungus
materialists?

(8)

MONSOON

zooms the monsoon
zappelins
palm-leaves
whipt to splinters
seething boisterous hordes tee-hee-E
shells dropping in no man's-land
crikey
the sea is laughing
catamaran clutter of crudity

*VOICES

I heard your name among the flowers
Breathing soft as April showers
Where sea-weed whispered on the ocean bed
I heard your name
I heard your name echoing through
The ocean vaults of flowing blue
Where sea-shells crooned and ripples swooned
I heard your name
I heard your name in the bamboo laughter
And the sizzling of the blue lake water
And in the land of broken hearts
I, I heard your name

REVELATION

Tears, sausage tears, dumbly dropping like apples
more eloquent than cabbages

(9)

HEARTACHE

Rose-petals and woodwind

You

Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic
iron-rollers on the gravel
lurching and scrunching

with a jangle of pistons

You in me

This incessant rasp and irritation

rankling as a supreme passion

may make me kill

this other you

and me

and

I will slide through the centuries

scyller and blind

noiseless as a ghost

gliding on the weeds of the wind

and in each tangle

fumble

for something I have lost

and cannot remember

Through interplanetary space

slinking

like a fox with one eye

I will go

searching

searching

(10)

for a sensation I have lost

and cannot remember

.....thus it is

I found

It's better to have you and suffer
than not to have you at all

*MUTABILITY

Behold the caterpillar crawl today,

Amoeba-like, a blotch of sombre grey.

Tomorrow, see him draped in red and gold,

Inflame each ferny bank and withy wold.

Behold the white-ant slit today on wings

Of gauzy fineness—most hyaline of things

But see the morn bath left him wingless, shorn,

He's but a worm, a crawling worm forlorn.

Thus must this worldly windmill run its course,

The rich be crushed, penny find a close;

Thus must the proud detrued crawl and groan,

The low exalted reap the good they've sown.

ABSTRACTION

Blue shadows sprawl on the wall

The soul gapes to an inner life in life

Rub rub rub this consciousness

RUB

R

U

B

damn.

(11)

ESCAPE

dust
life was once
dusk
and dust
damn!
skybird
pop
curse
dust and dust
what a life!
lover
dead
skyfarer
done to death
bird
a bird
death and dust
detrusion
disembougement
deliberate depletion
dust and damp and debris decrepit
daubed with blood
damp
so damp
.....
i am desolate
disconsolate
and i crane
to the pool of the sky

(12)

wrinkled
and damp
delightfully
and in oness with my beloved
damp
so damp
death and dust and debris
daubed with blood
delicious
the damp,
the oneness.....

dust
life was once
dusk
and dust
damn!

•CHANSON

Of my hunger and thirst
you found nourishment
in the vain longing of my heart
your consolation
in the vagueness of the never-returning day
intangibility of thought
confusion of hours
you found the realization of day and night
peace

(13)

and the passage of hours

You have built your halls with my heart's dust
your castles on the ruins of my life
your hope
of my failures
your indifference
of my love

But what may be, I do not cry or complain
because I gave you all my tears
long ago

and since you seem so happy in your indifference
what care I ?

WOMAN

Incursion into India of the ukelele
lead of the lotus and flingree temples
heavy with floselle and figurines
four-stringed Maori toad

but it cheered me by the whistling stream
strafed, strafed
quashed Stradivarius by the whistling stream

Incursion into me of you
was there a need
a necessity ?

i do not know
but you were also beauty
i carved a niche for you

ESCAPE

A square ball rolled on the ground

(14)

RECALESCENCE

Warm fires, red fires glowing fierce and red
rough, scrabbage and rags and bone and rectilinear logs
and scabrous trash and weeviled wistaria
burning

crackling and woofling

sahara

and sahara

A douche

of pagan nonpareil

sailed

on my unawareness

i was left

smoking, smoking

limp and plasticized

a ruin of palsied cinders

then

your breath

and recalescence

and death

Woman

who plays with toys

a toy

has a heart

I

A square pillar stood in the market-place
for all to see

i broke it

hee, hee!

(15)

LANDSCAPE

Blob in the distance
ink, dark ink
electric fizzie on the skyline
stilted shadows
zooming gratingly crookedly on the ground
Ground GROUND
Grind and grate
Dum. Dum. fizzie, POP
Balloons
BALLOONS

L'ENVOI

Friend of the morrow, I have wrought my work;
The days of toil are ended and I rest;
The work I laboured at so meekly, sweetly,
Now 'tis thine. 'Twas I that loved it best.
Hope of the morrow, fill again my breast!
Rise, rise again in all thy sweetness, rise!
'Tell me I laboured not in vain; this work
One heart shall love, oh just one pair of eyes!
Take, kindly hand, the image I have wrought,
And turn it softly in thy glowing hands.
Let trickle through false tawdries and the tinsel,
Bear the rest to isles of golden sands,
Where school-boy fears and hopes and consolations,
Which perbance in youth thou may'st have seen,
Thou'lt find arrayed, as in the days of old,
The same delights and sorrows that have been.